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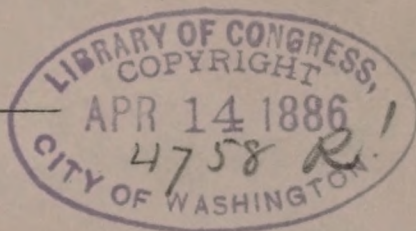
WALTER HARMSSEN.

A TALE OF
REFORMATION-TIMES IN HOLLAND.

✓ BY
E. GERDES.

35
TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH

BY REV. DANIEL VAN PELT.



PHILADELPHIA :
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
No. 1334 CHESTNUT STREET.

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No. 9. H. July 13, 1906

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

THE author of the following tale is well and favorably known in his native country as the writer of stories illustrating the progress of the Reformation in Holland. The present little work bears directly upon the establishment of the Reformed Church in the United Provinces of the Dutch republic. In the narrative, at first we see the Church still "*under the cross*,"* when the struggle for national existence was yet going on in the very heart of Holland; but toward the latter part of the story we reach the period when the Church was assuming definite shape as an organized ecclesiastical body and obtaining recognition as a State-Church—features which did not fully belong to it,

*In the year 1568 (the first of the "Eighty Years' War," 1568-1648) the Church adopted the following name: "The Netherland Churches which sit *Under the Cross* and are scattered within and without the Netherlands."

perhaps, till at or after the famous Synod of Dort. As is well known, there exists in the United States a lineal descendant of that Reformed Church of Holland, long designated by the same title in English that it bears in the mother-country—"Protestant Reformed Dutch Church"—but now styled "The Reformed (Dutch) Church in America." While, then, the following story is eminently interesting and instructive from a merely religious standpoint, it will also interest and instruct those who love to trace the dealings of the Lord in the history of his Church on earth.

The author, writing for a Holland public, naturally took for granted a knowledge of the history of the country much more universal than can be expected to exist among our American public, even though we possess the brilliant volumes of Motley. It was thought expedient, therefore, to add an original chapter (Chapter II.), and also to make addition to another chapter (XVII.), to place the American reader in ready possession of the historical situation in the midst of which the events of the tale are supposed to occur.

The translation has been made throughout as free as was consistent with fidelity to the author.

Occasional departures from the text have been ventured upon, but always with a view to the altered conditions, as to both country and language, under which the work must now needs hope to win the interest and attention of a reading public. Most of the original chapters have been divided into two and new titles given them, to render the perusal more convenient.

D. V. P.

WALTER HARMSSEN.

CHAPTER I.

OUR HERO INTRODUCED.

ON one of the last days of July, 1573, a lad about fourteen years of age might have been seen cautiously wending his way across some wheat-fields in the Netherlands. Now and then he stood and looked carefully around, as though he feared some one was observing him. It was a warm day, and the position of the sun showed that it was nearly twelve o'clock. Large drops of sweat trickled down the boy's forehead from beneath his broad-brimmed felt hat, and occasionally he stopped to wipe his face with the wide-puffed sleeves of his light-brown jacket. At length he reached the last field where the golden grain waved in graceful pride, and a beam of joy sparkled in his eye.

"If Uncle Ruikhaver will only keep his word!" he muttered to himself, while he pushed aside some of the stalks and directed an eager glance toward the sandhills, at whose foot he noticed some birch

trees. "This must be the place," he continued, "to which Uncle Ruikhaver told me a week ago to-day to come at this very hour. I hope nothing has happened to keep him from meeting me. That would grieve me very much, for he promised me that he would do his best to get some news of father.—Poor father!" he sighed, and a sad look came over his face; "where are you at this time? Perhaps groaning in some deep dungeon into which the cruel Spaniards have cast you, or else resting in your grave after fearful tortures."

These thoughts filled the boy with sadness, and for a while he hung his head. But suddenly he lifted it up; a frown darkened his brow, his eyes flashed in anger, he clenched his hands and raised them above his head, as if an enemy were really standing before him.

"Oh, you persecutors!" he said, bitterly; "wait till I get strength to use the sword! If you have really tormented my father, you inhuman wretches, I will not rest till I have revenged myself upon you. Oh," he went on, setting his teeth—"oh, if I could only have my revenge now! That would be the greatest delight of my heart."

In this defiant attitude he stood for some time, but before long, as if he had suddenly come to different thoughts, he let his hands fall gently by his side, his features assumed a pleasanter expression, and a smile lit up his countenance.

“Revenge!” he said, slowly—“revenge! Would I take revenge? That would surely grieve my father. How often would he set me on his knee when mother was still living and tell me about Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us, and who, instead of taking revenge upon his enemies, prayed for them! No; I will not take revenge. It was God’s will that father should separate himself from me and go everywhere preaching the gospel, in danger of being murdered at any moment. And, though I can’t say it is so very pleasant to stay all alone with grandfather, away from almost everybody else, still—”

He was again getting despondent, and, muttering, “Where can Uncle Ruikhaver stay so long? It must be one o’clock, and grandfather has surely had dinner,” he pushed some wheat-stalks aside to see if his uncle was coming, when suddenly he observed among the birch trees opposite to him the form of a man, who quickly hid himself behind one of the thickest trees. At first he thought he had not seen aright; but when at the same time he perceived some hares running with great speed away from the very spot, he concluded that there really must be some one hiding there.

“Who can that be?” he asked himself, “and why does he keep himself hid so? That means mischief. How fortunate that no one can see me here, with the stalks bending over my head in such

a way that I can scarcely see what is going on in the sandhills! Still, I must be careful and keep a good lookout."

He rubbed his eyes, so as to clear them of the perspiration that flowed down into them from his forehead, and fixed his eyes intently upon the birch-grove. His heart beat quickly, for it seemed to him as if the man must know something of his whereabouts, and as if he had some evil purpose in his mind. At last the lad saw clearly that some of the underbrush was pushed aside, and at the same time he perceived the head of a man, whose eyes glared around in all directions.

"That's the Noortdorp Fox," said the boy, not without terror; "I know him by his red hair and long nose. If he is lying in wait there, it must surely be for some bad purpose; for everybody is afraid of him. I remember very well how Aggie told me the other day that the Noortdorp Fox plays the spy. He betrayed his own brother to the priests because he made fun of the image-worship of the Romish Church."

The boy was interrupted in his reflections by a new movement among the underbrush. He saw "the Fox" pushing a gun along the ground and placing it in a sort of rest.

"The traitor!" muttered the boy, between his teeth. "Whom can he have in aim now? Not Uncle Ruikhaver? That may be;" and as the

thought struck him fear caused the blood to course rapidly through his veins.

Suddenly his eye caught a new object in the direction of Castricum. With great swiftness it approached the place where he was concealed; and when he could clearly discern what the object really was, he uttered a soft cry of joy:

"That is Pol, uncle's poodle. But where is his master?—Here, Pol!" he called out to the dog as he was about to rush past him. "Here, Pol, Pol! Here!"

The poodle stopped at once and sniffed the air.

"This way, Pol," said the boy, in subdued voice, while he kept himself carefully concealed among the stalks, not forgetting the man in the birch-grove. "Here, Pol! It's I!"

The dog now seemed to recognize the voice. Cautiously pushing his hairy head between the high wheat-stalks, he went toward our lad; and no sooner did he see him than he leaped upon him and licked his hands with every token of delight.

"Well, Pol, what are you doing here? Where's your master?"

The dog could not answer, of course; but, looking at the boy, he set his forepaws against his shoulders, which Pol could easily do, as the boy was sitting down in the sand.

"What a friendly dog you are, Pol!" said the boy, laying his hand upon the curly head of the

poodle. "I only wish you could tell me why your master hasn't come yet. But what's this round your neck?" he continued, feeling a stout cord that was wound around the dog's neck. He quickly untied the knot, unwound the cord, and underneath it discovered a piece of parchment. Hastily unfolding this, he found written upon it some lines which, to his joy, he recognized to be in his uncle's handwriting. But his joy was soon changed into alarm when he read the following words, addressed to his grandfather:

"Flee! you are betrayed. The Noortdorp Fox has seen that you read the Bible. Before long your house will be searched and you imprisoned. Again, flee! I cannot protect you, for I must remain at Heilo, where the prince of Orange has sent me to assist Alkmaar. God be with you! He is near."

The poor boy knew not whether he was awake or dreaming. He reflected for a moment, while Pol kept rubbing his hairy head against his cheeks.

"That Noortdorp Fox!" he said. "The traitor! What has poor grandfather done to him? 'Flee,' writes uncle, but where to? I cannot move myself here but this same Noortdorp Fox will see me. I don't know what to do; and yet it is high time that I get away from here. It is about two miles to grandfather's house, and so I had better go and warn him.—And where will *you* go?" said he to the poodle, who watched him as attentively as a

child listening to its teacher. "Wait; I'll tear off the last line of uncle's note and tie the parchment again round your neck. Then uncle will see that you have done your errand all right. Now, Pol, go home. Run!" he whispered, sharply, to the dog.

At these decisive words Pol darted away, soon cleared the wheatfield, and ran off toward the sand-hills in the direction of Heilo. The lad observed how his head almost touched the sand as the poodle was following his former tracks by means of his acute scent.

Bang! There came a shot from the birch trees. For a moment the boy trembled for his life; but when he had assured himself that this shot was not meant for him, he looked anxiously in the direction which Pol had taken. The poodle had indeed been the object of the Noortdorp Fox's aim, yet it seemed that the bullet had injured the dog but slightly. Pol indeed limped a little on three legs, but he had probably been under fire before, for he bounded away on his three legs even more rapidly than on four a while ago.

"Ah! you missed him, traitor!" said the boy, exultantly. "But you'll get your pay yet. Wait till you get into Uncle Ruikhaver's hands!"

He would have said more, but, to his terror, he perceived that the Noortdorp Fox, after loading his gun, left the birch-grove and came straight to-

ward his hiding-place. At first he was about to creep on hands and feet through the waving grain, but, considering that this would avail him little, as the Fox would no doubt discover his tracks, he concluded it was best to remain quietly where he was. He hid the piece of parchment as quickly as possible in the wide folds of his jacket, and as he did so he found, to his great delight, a dagger given him by Geertsen, the hunter, in the left pocket of his waistcoat. He grasped it firmly in his right hand, and, recalling Uncle Ruikhaver's last line, he bowed his head, saying, "God is near!"

"So he is," echoed a powerful voice close by him.

The lad turned around, and saw, to his joy, Geert Geertsen, the hunter of Rooswyck house, with whom he had spent many a happy hour, and who had told him so many thrilling stories about the events of the times.

"How did you come here?"

"Hush!" said Geertsen; "keep still! Do you not see who is watching us? But let him come; I have both my pistols ready for him."

"But you'll not kill him?"

"Only in the utmost necessity, although I would gladly be driven to that necessity; for oh, the traitor!"

Meanwhile, the Noortdorp Fox had come nearer; holding the long firearm in both hands, he advanced slowly. At first sight one would say that

he was cross-eyed, for, while the one eye looked toward the east, the other looked westward. This was, however, nothing but a habit: with his evil heart and his guilty conscience, he constantly imagined that an enemy was pursuing him. He was also unceasingly occupied in spying out persecuted Protestants and betraying them to those in the service of the Spanish government and the Romish Church.

"There he comes," whispered Geert Geertsen; "keep still."

The Fox came nearer and nearer. He had already reached the low sandhill which separated him from the field where our two friends were concealed, when Geertsen suddenly sprang to his feet and ran straight upon the Fox, holding a pistol in each hand.

"Hold!" he called out to him.

The Fox grew pale with fright at beholding thus unexpectedly his dreaded enemy, the hunter of Rooswyck. Involuntarily he obeyed the command of the hunter, and stood as if rooted to the ground. Nevertheless, he kept hold of his weapon, and even made a slight movement with it.

"Put down that weapon," cried Geert Geertsen, with emphasis, "and stir not, or as surely as the duke of Alva is a villain I will shoot you through your traitor-head!"

The Fox, however, did not seem to feel at all disposed to obey, for with a rapid movement he

aimed his piece at the hunter. But the latter, accustomed to such manœuvres and alert as the deer, stooped down and quick as thought threw himself headlong upon the Fox and hurled him with great force into the sand. In the same instant Geertsen seized him by the throat and placed a pistol to his heart, and, calling out to him, "Pray for your soul, traitor!" was about to kill him, when of a sudden the lad threw both arms around the hunter's neck and besought him to spare the man's life.

"I do it of necessity," answered the hunter. "He has brought so many of our faith to the death that it would give me pleasure to make him swallow a leaden pill."

"But, then, may you revenge yourself?" asked the lad; and his voice trembled a little, as if he were afraid that such words did not befit a boy's mouth.

"No; true enough. But the Lord delays his vengeance so long!"

"How do you know that? Do you not believe that the Lord's vengeance will fall some time? Doesn't he say, 'Vengeance is mine'?"

"You are right," replied the hunter; "I will therefore leave vengeance with the Lord. But still the wretch shall know that he has been in my power, the detestable spy! I will only cut off his ears, and then let him go."

The Fox grew pale and stammered some words of "mercy" and "pity."

"Be silent, villain," spoke the hunter, "or I'll cut off your long nose too."

He was indeed preparing to inflict this punishment upon the persecutors' spy, when the lad once more spoke a good word for the enemy and requested Geertsen not to do it.

"If you knew what I know, boy," said the hunter, "you would not ask this."

The Fox began to get some hope, and again stammered the word "mercy."

"Be still!" commanded Geert Geertsen. "Thank God and this lad that I do not follow up my intentions. But you won't get off so easily. Hear what I tell you, and woe to you if you don't do what I say!"

The Fox spoke not a word.

"First, then," continued the hunter, "turn yourself so that you lie with your nose in the sand; next I will bind your arms on your back, and then you may go back to your traitorous hole of Noortdorp to make known there the fearful deed which Geert Geertsen has done to you, you assassin!"

The Fox gnashed his teeth with rage, and did not at once obey the command.

"You won't do it? Well, then, off with your ears; for you know the saying goes, 'Those that won't hear must feel.'"

The Noortdorp Fox grew pale with rage, but, seeing that he was no match for the hunter of Rooswyck, he quietly turned himself around and let Geertsen bind both arms on his back with a stout rope. Then the hunter helped him to his feet.

"Now, Fox," said Geertsen, "take a good look at me. Impress my likeness deeply upon your memory, so that you may at all times recognize me, and you may revenge yourself upon me if ever you should be happy enough to get me into your power. Now go toward the north. Away! out of my sight!"

But the Fox did not stir; he kept his eyes fixed upon the gun, that lay by him on the ground.

"Ah! I understand," said the hunter, mockingly: "you think I will keep your firearm. No; my hand is too honest to keep the murder-tool of a traitor! You may take it along, and, that the carrying may be easy to you, I will tie it upon your back, between your arms. Wait but a moment."

Geert Geertsen took his hunter's bag from his shoulder, drew out a long rope and tied the Fox's firearm on his back in a few seconds. The latter, fitted out in this manner, slowly wended his way toward Noortdorp.

"And now, my young friend, it is time that we part," said the hunter to the boy. "You go to your grandfather; I will follow the villain from a distance, to keep an eye on him. Perhaps we shall

never see each other again, for this very night I go to Enkhuizen. If, however, it please God that we shall meet hereafter, well, then I hope it will be in better times. Farewell!"

The hunter pressed the lad's hand in his own, and followed the Fox, who walked on with difficulty, like a dog which has received a beating from his master.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW EXPLANATIONS.

BEFORE we go any farther with our story, or accompany our new friend Walter to his home, our youthful readers will wish to have answers to some questions that no doubt are crowding to their lips.

What was there about this year A. D. 1573 that put matters into so unsettled a condition and caused Walter's uncle to write so startling a letter to his grandfather? Was Holland all in an uproar? and for what reason?

A few weeks before this day on which we find Walter Harmsen in his perilous predicament, on the 12th of this same month of July, 1573, the city of Haarlem—within a few miles of which Walter and his grandfather lived—had been taken by the Spaniards after sustaining a siege of seven months. On December 10, 1572, Don Frederick de Toledo, at the head of a Spanish army of thirty thousand veteran troops, had arrived before its walls and in the name of the king of Spain commanded it to open its gates and surrender.

But what were these Spaniards doing in Holland? and what right had the king of Spain to send an army thither, and to demand the surrender of a city?

It will hardly be enough to answer that the king of Spain was the rightful sovereign lord of these Netherland provinces, for that will require a good many other explanations to show how this strange state of things came about. Let us begin by saying, then, that every one of these provinces was in earlier centuries either an earldom, a duchy or a principality, the hereditary possession of counts of Holland, of dukes of Gueldres and of a number of other such dignitaries. By might or by fraud, by purchase or by intermarriage, all these titles and possessions had come at last to be united in one person, who was also the duke of Burgundy, a vast province now a part of France. This duke of Burgundy married a daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of Spain. They had a son called Charles, who became the heir to the Spanish throne through his mother, and the heir to Burgundy and all the Netherland provinces through his father. When Charles grew to man's estate, he became king of Spain, duke of Burgundy and hereditary possessor of all those Lowland counties and duchies now constituting the kingdoms of Holland and Belgium. This Charles V. of Spain rose to even greater heights

of glory; he was elected emperor of Germany. Whether tired of all these distinctions and the care of these vast and varied possessions, or for some other reason, in the year 1555, Charles laid aside his powers as emperor and as king. Spain and the Netherlands, by natural descent, passed into the hands of his son, Philip, commonly known as Philip II., king of Spain.

Meantime, during the reign of the emperor Charles V., a change had come over the face of the religious world. The doctrines of the Reformation had begun to be preached by Martin Luther in Germany, Ulrich Zwinglius in Switzerland and John Calvin in France. These doctrines, which denounced the errors and superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church, and the vices and crimes of its priests and rulers, spread like wildfire among the people. They penetrated the Netherlands and gained many adherents. Charles could not do as he wished with Luther and his followers in Germany, but in the Netherlands he thought he was absolute master; and he caused those who favored the doctrines of Luther to be imprisoned, fined, tortured, killed. From the year 1521, when he began the terrible work, till 1555, when he abdicated his throne, thousands of innocent persons were beheaded, strangled, buried alive or burned at the stake. He solemnly bequeathed this horrible butchery to his son Philip as a duty which he

owed to God and the Church of Christ; which, of course, in their view, was the Roman Catholic Church. He had left the work to no unwilling hands: Philip was even more bigoted and zealous than his father. He declared that he would rather die a thousand deaths than reign over heretics. He deliberately and formally condemned to death the entire people of the Low Countries whether Catholics or Protestants, because he considered the whole country infected with the heresy.

It so happened, however, that these Netherlanders had been a liberty-loving race for centuries, and by means of their great wealth, accumulated through their numerous industries, their skillful arts and their immense commerce, they had wrested important privileges and liberties from their sovereign lords. These arbitrary persecutions and executions for mere differences in religious belief clashed directly with these privileges. Charles and Philip introduced and maintained the "Inquisition." This was an institution called into existence especially to cope with the offence of heresy, as any dissent from the teachings of Rome was called. Its officers could arrest any one on the merest suspicion or the slightest accusation; then the "inquisitors" proper, or judges, could condemn to any punishment they pleased (and that of torture and the most painful executions were the ones they almost invariably selected) without any of the ordinary forms and proceedings of courts of

justice and in the face of the plainest laws of the land.

It was just this overriding of the laws and privileges of these free countries that roused the whole nation, nobles and people, Protestants and Roman Catholics, alike, against their sovereign. The leader of this political opposition was William, prince of Orange. He sought to guide matters cautiously but firmly, and avoided as long as it was possible an open breach and an appeal to arms. But the king's obstinate despotism and blind bigotry drove the patriots to extremities. Philip had long since left the country himself to establish his court in Spain. First he had committed the government of the Netherlands into the hands of his sister, Margaret, duchess of Parma. When he saw the opposition against him growing more desperate instead of being crushed by his oppressive measures, he sent (in 1567), as governor-general over these provinces, the duke of Alva—a famous general of a cruel and ferocious nature—at the head of eleven thousand picked Spanish and Italian troops. This was the signal for open revolt. The prince of Orange fled the country and raised an army in Germany, with which he invaded the provinces at various points, gaining some successes over the Spaniards; but in the end he was compelled to abandon the enterprise without any real advantages. Alva went to work at a fearful rate, taxing the people to their last dollar,

confiscating the lands and goods of the rich, and beheading, drowning, burning and hanging heretics and others. He was governor for six years, and at the end of that time he boasted that he had caused eighteen thousand six hundred victims to be executed.

Such a monster of wickedness made the people of Holland all the more determined in their resistance to tyranny. At first they were cowed into passive endurance of their wrongs, and hence the ill-success that attended the efforts of their would-be liberator, the patriotic prince of Orange. But one bold deed—as is often the case in such circumstances—turned the scales and roused the nation to renewed struggles for their freedom. Great numbers of those who had been driven from their homes had taken refuge from persecution upon the sea, and had organized themselves into a sort of impromptu navy, which was half patriotic and half piratical. This navy made a descent upon the coast of Holland at the mouth of the river Maas (or Meuse), and captured, and successfully held for the prince, the city of Briel. This auspicious event occurred on April 1, 1572.

The example of Briel was contagious. Garrisons of the Spaniards had been placed within almost every city of Holland; these garrisons were now driven out by the people of these cities. City after city declared for the prince of Orange and cast off

the yoke of Spain, till but a very few were left in the hands of the oppressors.

The duke of Alva was at first stupefied with astonishment, but he soon came to his senses. He sent his son, Don Frederick de Toledo, with an immense army, to force the revolted cities back into allegiance to Philip, and to punish them for their rebellion.

The province of Gueldres, or Gelderland, was first invaded by the Spaniards. The city of Zutphen was taken by surprise, and by command of the duke not a man was left alive in it. Then the army turned toward the west and passed through the province of Utrecht on its way to Amsterdam, which still held for Spain. The little city of Naarden, on the shore of the Zuyder Zee, lay in its course. Imagining that but a small division of the Spanish army was passing, Naarden bade defiance to the demand for surrender. No sooner, however, was it known that Don Frederick himself and his whole force were before its walls, than it changed its mind and quickly admitted the enemy. That slight mistake was thought deserving of a most inhuman punishment. The people were directed to assemble in the cathedral; there they were massacred in cold blood and the church was set on fire, so that scarce forty of the entire population escaped to tell the awful fate of their fellow-burghers.

Leaving the town to smoulder beneath its ruins,

the Spaniards hurried on to Amsterdam, a convenient base of operations for reducing both North and South Holland, as it lay between them. Don Frederick determined first of all to take Haarlem, lying directly west of Amsterdam, as by this stroke the two provinces would be completely severed. It was thought that Haarlem, intimidated by the fate of Naarden, would at once surrender, especially as its defences were looked upon as the weakest in the country. The Spanish governor and his son were much mistaken. For seven months their great army was kept at bay by the Hollanders. Two or three skillfully-planned assaults, conducted by experienced generals with the best troops of Europe, after the most destructive cannonading, were repulsed by the besieged with ruinous loss. Sortie after sortie was successfully made by the patriots, and much injury inflicted upon the Spaniards. A corps of three hundred armed and disciplined women, under the leadership of the Lady Kenan Hasselaar, boldly issued from the walls with these sorties and did effective service. It was nothing but famine that in the end reduced the city. Don Frederick had promised safety to life and property, but these promises were made only to be broken, and after the surrender twenty-three hundred persons were executed.

Hardly had Haarlem fallen when the Spanish general began to make preparations to push north-

ward. The city of Alkmaar was the object of his march, and to render it assistance Walter's uncle, Captain Ruikhaver, and other officers and their commands in the North of Holland, were directed by the prince to add themselves to its scanty garrison. We may anticipate here and say that Alkmaar was not taken, but that the Spaniards were forced to abandon it on the 8th of October of this same year, 1573, after a siege of seven weeks.

We have now shown the youthful inquirer how it happened that the Spaniards had come with an army into Holland and what had taken place in the immediate vicinity of Walter's home. Haarlem's siege, although it ended so fatally for the city, nevertheless, on account of the unheard-of bravery of its defence, has made the city famous in history.

Before we go on with our story, however, we must speak of one other thing which made Haarlem renowned.

During those sad and cruel times, when the adherents of the Reformation fell by thousands every year, it may well be supposed that they were not accommodated with comfortable churches in which to preach the gospel. Their doctrines were disseminated with great caution and circumspection, and principally by means of books and pamphlets. As some one has said, "it snowed" printed matter of this kind. But in the year

1566 there sprang into sudden activity a movement which may have been on foot before, but certainly not on such a gigantic scale. This was "field-preaching." Preachers of the Reformed doctrines would gather hearers by thousands (in some cases as many as twenty-five thousand) in the open fields, and there preach to them for hours together. To prevent molestation on the part of the authorities, these multitudes would go armed to the place of meeting.

On the 21st of July, 1566, such a meeting was appointed to take place at Overveen, a village in the neighborhood of Haarlem. The man who was to preach there was a converted monk, Peter Gabriel by name. The day before, constant streams of people had come to Haarlem from a distance to spend the night. In the morning the magistrates closed the gates in order to detain these multitudes, and thus to prevent the gathering. But it was in vain. Hundreds climbed over the walls and swam the moat; hundreds slipped out of the gates at every opportunity; others manifested such indignation that it was thought expedient to open the gates.

The crowds flocked about the preacher to the number of five thousand. A natural amphitheatre was formed by the gentle slopes of the surrounding sandhills, and two long spears stuck into the sand, with one tied to the other in a horizontal position, made a rude support for the speaker. He chose as

his text Eph. ii. 8-10, beginning, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith," and for four hours in the hot July sun the preacher held these multitudes spellbound. Before dismissing the assembly it was announced that on the following morning, Monday, the 22d of July, a similar service would be held at the same place. Then Gabriel with three of his friends mounted a wagon and sped northward to Alkmaar, near which he was to preach on the morrow.

Down from Alkmaar, to fill the appointment at Overveen of which we have just heard, came a preacher whom we shall hear mentioned in the course of our story. This was John Arentsoon. He was a man mighty in the Scriptures, but without education, being a simple basketmaker by trade. Joined to these fearless and eloquent preachers were men of lesser note, but of great power, nevertheless, among whom was Walter's father. As he journeyed from place to place, Walter was necessarily separated from his father, and for the present was staying with his grandfather in their rural home.

CHAPTER III.

A DESOLATED HOME.

AFTER the termination of the conflict between the hunter and the Fox of Noortdorp, narrated in our first chapter, the lad's eyes followed the two men for a few moments, and then he turned and proceeded with rapid steps toward his home. On the way he thought upon all that had happened to him this morning, and, suddenly recalling Uncle Ruikhaver's note, he began to feel very anxious. He ran as fast as his feet would allow him, and about fifteen minutes later he saw from afar his grandfather's lowly but pleasant dwelling.

The nearer he came to the house, the more he became convinced that something extraordinary must have occurred there. He was surprised not to find Aggie, the servant-maid, on the road. Whenever anything had taken him from home, he was always accustomed to see her come out to meet him on his return. But not this time: all was still. He did not hear even the notes of the finches and redbreasts which had built their nests near the house. Everywhere he observed

the marks of horseshoes in the sand, so that he feared that his grandfather had received a disagreeable visit. Afraid that perhaps some unknown danger threatened him also, he left the sandy road, made his way through the underbrush at his left, and concealed himself amid the low shrubbery that surrounded the house.

Scarcely had he reached this place of safety when the sound of moaning struck his ear; he listened intently, and he plainly heard his name. He pushed slowly through the underbrush, and pretty soon he perceived at a little distance from him the figure of a woman, whom he instantly recognized as Aggie. The poor girl was leaning against the trunk of a young oak tree, and on seeing the grandson of her master she stretched out her left hand toward him, while with the right she supported her bleeding head.

"Aggie, Aggie! What ails you! What has happened to you?" broke forth the terrified boy.

But Aggie had scarcely any power to speak. She took him by the arm, and, drawing him to her, with difficulty she whispered in broken words,

"Walter—dear Walter—flee! The Spaniards—have been—here."

"And where is grandfather, then?" with deep emotion asked the lad whom we heard addressed as Walter.

"I don't know. I only saw—how these hang-

men—bound—my poor—old master—between two horses—and dragged him—along.”

The boy uttered a cry of consternation. He clasped his hands with loud expressions of sorrow, crying,

“Oh, why was I not here? Had I been here, it would not have happened. I would have defended myself with my dagger until not a Spaniard had remained.”

“Thank God—that you—were not here,” said Aggie, in great feebleness. “What could—you have—done against—so many armed—men?”

“And what have they done to you?” asked Walter, anxiously looking at her wounds and with his handkerchief wiping the blood that streamed down her cheek. “Poor Aggie! what have they done to you?”

It was, however, with great difficulty that Aggie could utter any intelligible words. All that Walter learned amounted to the following: His grandfather and Aggie had waited a long while with dinner, but at length Aggie had placed the victuals on the table, and was just engaged in dishing them out, when of a sudden they heard loud cries and a confused noise outside the house. Grandfather scarcely had time to close the Bible, wherein he had been reading a few moments, when the door was violently thrown open and some Spanish soldiers entered the dwelling with the cry,

“Where is the Dutch heretic?”

It was not necessary to search long. Walter's grandfather, who was lame, remained quietly sitting. He held his thin hands upon the Bible, as if he would still defend God's word. The aged man was ruthlessly torn from his chair. Two priests who during Don Frederick's stay at the castle at Cleef accompanied the Spanish commander snatched the Bible from the table and with the rage of wild beasts tore it to pieces and trampled the leaves under foot. Aggie came to the aid of the old man, but one of the soldiers gave her so violent a blow on the head with his halberd that she staggered back and fell down. Others struck her with their pikes, so that she was left insensible. When she regained consciousness, she saw how they led the aged man away. With hands bound they made him walk between two horses, while the foot-soldiers struck him in the back with the butt-ends of their muskets when he almost sank down. More than this Aggie had not seen; the last words, however, that she had heard told that her master was to be led to Haarlem, there on the scaffold to die the martyr's death of a Protestant. Fearing that the soldiers might ere long return, Aggie had crept away from the house; for the villains had wounded her so badly that she could no longer stand up. She had fortunately reached the wood, and far away from all human help she patiently awaited her death.

Walter had listened to all this with the most painful concern. The big tears rolled down his cheeks, and he regretted that he was still so young and had not sufficient strength to carry her to the nearest dwelling. But, alas! no house was to be found within two miles. Most of the people had left the neighborhood at the approach of the Spaniards, and the few who remained he could not trust; for many of them were in league with the enemy. Where, then, must he look for help? If he had only a little water! for Aggie was suffering from a burning thirst. But where should he look for water? There was but one place where it could be found—in the forsaken dwelling. He told Aggie he would try and enter the house.

Aggie had no strength to offer any objections; accordingly, Walter left her, in the hope of soon being able to return with some refreshment. He crept on his hands and feet through the underbrush, and soon he came to an opening in the wood which made a separation between himself and the dwelling. From here he could observe the house. The door stood wide open, and he could easily see how the Spaniards had conducted themselves. The door-posts were cut to pieces with axes; not a window had been spared; wanton hands had even cut down the flowers which Aggie had so carefully nurtured. But Walter could hear no sound; all nature was so quiet that it seemed as if the birds of heaven them-

selves mourned over the injury done to the people of God.

Walter now crept cautiously on, and, venturing at last, he sprang with one bound from the last shrub to the house. He entered the room. What destruction! Everything was broken to pieces and plundered; everything of value and all clothing had been taken away. He plainly saw the preparations for the meal, and, though he felt very hungry, he could not take any of the tempting morsels, trodden as they were in the sand and dirt. Fortunately, he found a large piece of bread, and after taking a deep bite into it he put the remainder in his pocket, well aware that this might be of service afterward. Walter also observed with indignation how his grandfather's Bible had been torn to pieces and the leaves scattered over the floor. This sight moved him deeply, and he could not bear to let the leaves lie around in that way. Hastily gathering all he could lay hands on, he rolled them together and hid them in his jacket. Next he went through another door, leading into the garden, where the well was. His quick eye had already found a pitcher, and after a little effort he succeeded in drawing up the chain and filling it. He eagerly took one or two draughts, and was on the point of returning to Aggie, pitcher in hand, when, to his terror, he heard distant voices. His curiosity did not permit him to take flight at once. Climbing

upon the edge of the well and holding fast to the iron arch, he could see a number of soldiers approaching from the direction of Beverwyk, their helmets and cuirasses flashing in the afternoon sun. He concluded that this was no longer a safe place, and sprang down from the edge of the well; and, holding the pitcher in his hand, he ran into the wood with the swiftness of the hunted deer. He found Aggie again with but little difficulty, but, alas! in what a condition! Her respiration was extremely difficult; she gasped for breath and could no longer press the hand which Walter held in his. He placed the pitcher to her lips, but it was of no use. All-powerless, the poor girl sank down, and, fixing her feeble eyes upon Walter, she said with the greatest effort,

“I die! God have mercy upon my poor soul—for Jesus’ sake. Tell my sister—you know her—tell her that I die—a true Chris—” Her voice failed her. A few moments later, and she was no more.

There stood poor Walter with the pitcher in one hand and the fingers of the dying woman in the other. But when he saw the pale hue of death spreading over the once-blooming features of the faithful Aggie, he could no longer restrain himself, but wept as though his heart would break. He could not, however, leave the body in this place, for the underbrush was here pretty well open. Afraid

that the Spaniards would soon find the corpse, he dragged it as well as he could to the thickest part of the wood; and scarcely had he done this when he heard the voices of the approaching soldiers. Plainly he heard said in good Dutch,

“We must thoroughly examine the house and its surroundings, for no doubt the heretic’s grandson is hiding here.”

“Yes, yes!” said another voice, which filled him with still greater terror, for he recognized it distinctly as the voice of the Noortdorp Fox—“yes, yes! He *must* be here, for less than two hours ago I left him within two miles of this place.”

“We will search for him, for does not his grandfather expect him?” said the first voice again, with a coarse laugh in which others joined.

“It would really be a pity if he escaped,” added the second voice, at which an icy feeling crept around Walter’s heart, “for the boy would surely give us a brighter bonfire than the lean ribs of the old heretic alone.”

“Come on!” said a commanding voice; “no loitering here.—You, Fox, stay by the house with these three musketeers, and I will go with my other men into the woods.”

Walter heard no more, but this was enough to make him anxious to preserve his life. With the agility of a cat he clambered up the thickest oak tree which he found in the vicinity, and concealed him-

self in the densest foliage of the heavy limbs. This had taken a great deal of effort, for he could not reach around the tree ; but he had been fortunate enough to find here a knot and there a broken branch, which had aided his ascent. But not alone had these supported him. Walter saw beyond the thick foliage the blue heavens, and, knowing that there dwells a God above who forsakes not the poor orphan, in his name and trusting in his aid he had accomplished the difficult ascent.

There, then, sat the lad, his legs drawn underneath him like a tailor's. In fact, he was so well concealed here that even the most experienced eye could not have discovered him ; and, resting upon the fulfillment of Uncle Ruikhaver's prayer that God might be near unto him, he awaited his enemies with less anxiety. And yet it was fortunate for Walter that the Spaniards did not come here, for the soldiers would undoubtedly have perceived his footprints in the sand, and also the direction in which he had dragged Aggie's body. Yes, the Lord was near unto him, and suffered not that he should at this time fall into the power of his enemies. Walter heard, indeed, the voices of the musketeers calling to one another in the wood—heard, indeed, many a wicked word mingled with curses in the Spanish language ; but here he sat in safety, as the squirrel in its nest. Fortunate, too, was it for him that the sun began slowly to descend toward

the horizon ; so that the soldiers, grown tired of their fruitless search, concluded at last to go back. He heard them murmur and curse in the distance, and the Noortdorp Fox especially expressed his vexation that the heretic boy had not been found. The villain ! he had already forgotten that Walter had been the very one who saved his life. But what do the ungodly know of gratitude ?

Although Walter could plainly hear that the soldiers had departed, and that even the Noortdorp Fox had left the house, he did not venture to come down from his hiding-place. He now let his feet hang down and placed himself more comfortably upon the broad limb. He meant to wait till night, and then, under cover of darkness, to seek refuge among the sandhills. Meanwhile, he examined his pockets, and after he had refreshed himself with a piece of bread which he had found in grandfather's house he took out the leaves of the torn Bible, which he had rolled up and put in his pocket. The first leaf which he took in hand contained a portion of the tenth chapter of Matthew. He turned it as much as possible toward the light, and there in his solitude, alone with his God, the persecuted boy read these words : "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake ; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." And a little farther on : "And fear not them which kill the body and are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear Him which is able

to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

The tears came into Walter's eyes as he read these words. How exactly and strikingly did they fit his case! They seemed to have been written expressly for him.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "it is true: the Lord was nigh unto me; and he shall also be nigh unto me henceforth, therefore need I fear nothing.—I thank thee, O faithful God, that thou hast thus far preserved me. Be yet further my guide, and grant that I may not deny thee, Lord Jesus, but may endure unto the end."

Meanwhile, it had grown dark all about him. He rolled the papers together again, and determined to place his trust in God and to leave these parts as soon as possible.

CHAPTER IV.

A NIGHT-SCENE.

WALTER climbed down the tree more quickly than he had gone up. His hands were a little bruised, so that the blood stood under the nails, but no other harm had come to him. His broad-brimmed felt hat was altogether out of shape, and the white cuffs of his wide-sleeved jacket had taken all the colors of the oak tree. It was, however, much darker below than it was up in the tree; so that he had need of being careful, as he went, lest he should run against the trees. Not to lose his way, he stood with his back against the oak tree, deliberating which direction he must take to get as soon as possible out of the woods. He dared not venture to go near the house, and, however much he suffered from thirst, he could not get himself to approach the place where Aggie's mangled corpse lay hid beneath the underbrush; and yet he would have gladly looked upon her once more. He resolved to keep going always straight ahead, but in a direction as much as possible toward

the left from where he started, expecting that in this way he would at length succeed in reaching the sandhills. Now feeling his way, now stumbling, now falling, he at last reached the edge of the woods, and, aided by the light of the moon, he soon found the sandy road, running obliquely through the underbrush, which led by many footpaths into the sandhills. He ran on without looking around. Acquainted with the location of the sandhills, or dunes, and well accustomed to such clamberings, he sprang down one hill and up another, and did not rest till he came to a hollow which lay between two high hills.

He resolved to stay here for the present, and, leaning comfortably against the steep sand-slope, he thought of means to spend the night here. Of sleep he could not think for a while yet, for the scenes which he had witnessed during the day rose so vividly before his mind that every moment he imagined he saw the face of the Noortdorp Fox; or when he took pains to banish that traitor from his sight, then he heard the cries and imprecations of the Spanish musketeers. Then, again, he thought of his dear grandfather, who had been so wickedly abused and dragged along by the soldiers. This reflection was so distressing to him that he began to cry and sob like a child that had lost its dearest treasure. Gradually, however, he controlled himself; for the hope that there

might still be escape for his grandfather gave him encouragement to think of himself.

Safely situated as he was here, still he could not say that it was as agreeable as he might wish. The cold night-air, freshened by the cool seabreeze, penetrated his clothes and made a chill pass through his limbs; so that he wished he could get under cover somewhere, were it no better a shelter than a barn. But where should he find such? He knew, indeed, that he was among the sandhills, but, so far as he could see or recollect, there was not a single dwelling or sheepfold hereabouts where he could spend the night. Nevertheless, he wished to make certain; and so he climbed the steepest hill and directed his eyes right and left. Far away rolled the German Ocean, and he could distinctly hear the beating of the waves upon the beach, but nowhere did he see anything that looked like a human dwelling. He was on the point of descending the hill, to spend the night as best he could in some nook in the sand, when he perceived the flickering of a flame not far distant from him. At first he thought he had not seen aright and that this light was perhaps nothing more than what is called "heat-lightning," but he soon convinced himself that it was more than this. A bright flame sprang up, and from the red glow which from time to time it cast around he understood that in order to feed it a handful of dry sand-plants was

now and then cast into it. What should Walter do? To remain where he was he wished not, and to go to the place where the fire was he dared not; for how could he know whether they were friends or enemies? Nevertheless, he must come to some conclusion; so, although halting between hope and fear, he ventured to go slowly forward.

When he had reached the foot of the high dune, he saw nothing more of the flame; but, having ascended the hill which rose in front of him, he found himself much nearer the fire he had lately discovered. Creeping onward with the utmost caution, he little by little neared the place, and at length reached a sandhill which, covered with low bushes, offered him a safe hiding-place from which he could observe everything that took place. Fortunately, the wind blew so that almost every word reached his ear. Walter lay down at full length upon the ground and crept beneath the low underbrush, and in this way saw and heard all.

In a sand-hollow between some hills overgrown with young trees there sat—or, rather, reclined—two soldiers whom Walter soon recognized as Spaniards. A third stood close by the fire, over-against a woman who seemed to be a prisoner, for her hands and feet were bound. Who that man was Walter could not at first perceive, for his face was turned away from him. It seemed that the captive was bitterly weeping, and her sobs could be heard

as far as Walter's hiding-place. The soldiers were sound asleep, but the man who stood in front of the fire with his back to Walter was continually talking to the woman—as it seemed, with little consolation for her. Now and then the sound of the words also reached Walter, but whether the man did not wish to disturb the sleepers, or whether there were some other reason for it, he spoke so low that Walter could not make out what he said. This was not at all to his liking, for Walter possessed a large measure of inquisitiveness; for which he could not be very greatly blamed in the circumstances, since all that had happened during the day might well induce him to be on the alert.

Meantime, the man, who still continued to talk to the prisoner, seemed to be growing angry at her weeping, for his voice became louder, and now and then Walter heard that he threatened to kill her. But she could not control herself, and the wind carried her sobs unceasingly to Walter's ear. The man became so incensed at this that he seized the captive by the arm and dragged her to the sandhill where Walter lay concealed.

Now the boy seemed to recognize the man: it was the same Noortdorp Fox who had that evening, in company with the Spanish musketeers, searched and kept watch at grandfather's house. He was filled with terror as he thought of the danger of being so near the dreaded man, and he

regretted too late the inquisitiveness which had brought him here.

"There!" said the Fox; "lie there. Then you will not disturb us any longer with your noise. Why don't you get asleep? Isn't it the last night you will spend among the sandhills?" he asked, mockingly; "for to-morrow I'll speak a good word for you and have you promoted on the great market-place at Haarlem—with a piece of rope round your neck," he added, in a low tone.

"The villain!" muttered Walter, inwardly, drawing forth his dagger. "Oh, were it in my power, I would—"

The woman, however, continued weeping, and distinctly Walter heard her say,

"What have I done to you, that you should have dragged me from my peaceful dwelling, while my brother Geert—"

"Be still!" roared the Fox; "do not speak that detested name in my hearing, for I have made a vow to St. Nicodemus that I will deliver up the whole family of that rebel to our Church."

"But what has my brother done to you?" asked the woman.

"'Done'!" replied the Fox, and his face assumed a most malignant expression. "What has he done to me? He treated me as though I were a wild beast, and without timely help I would probably have sunk down by the way."

"My brother told me that he had you in his power and at first wanted to shoot you, but that at the request of young Walter Harmsen he let you go unhurt."

"He lied, the heretic! My arms are still swollen, so tightly did he bind them. And, as to that young Walter Harmsen, whose grandfather I expect will be made a head shorter, I'll give him his share sooner or later; for he is a nephew of that detested Ruikhaver, who once let me be beaten black and blue by his soldiers. So it must go with all rebels and such as do not go back into the bosom of the holy mother-Church."

Walter felt anything but comfortable when he heard this; and when he learned how sad a fate awaited his dear grandfather, he was forced to put his hand upon his mouth to prevent himself from crying out aloud.

"But why not let me go?" cried the woman. "I never did you any harm. Who will now take care of my two little babes? My brother has gone to Enkhuizen, and my husband—"

"Well, and your husband?" asked the Fox, while he laughed wickedly.

But the woman gave no answer.

"Then I will tell you," angrily rejoined the Fox: "your husband, who formerly attended early mass every morning at Beverwyk, has been seduced to other sentiments by the heretic father of Walter

Harmsen, and wanders now all over the country and incites the farmers against our lawful count, the king of Spain. But we'll get hold of him yet."

The thought of her brave husband, who had followed the Lord's call, gave the poor woman courage, and, in spite of the distressful condition wherein she was, she said to the Fox,

"I thank my God, who had compassion upon my husband and myself and opened our eyes to Rome's—"

"Ha!" cried the Fox, furiously; and, running upon her, he seized her by the shoulders and threw her backward, so that she fell with her head against the branches of the undergrowth.

The woman uttered no complaint; on the contrary, the more the villain tormented her, the more she found that God is mighty in weakness.

"Think you that I fear your fury?" said the woman, with a calm voice, raising herself a little upon her elbows. "No; God knows I do not. Sooner or later he will surely requite you for all your wicked deeds. You have now torn me away from my children, but the time will come that you must render an account for this."

At this moment Walter observed that one of the soldiers moved; the boy, however, kept quiet and waited patiently, praying the Lord that help might speedily come.

The Fox, who did not seem to have been in the least moved by the words of the prisoner, would still give her to understand that he had heard her. He therefore bent over her, and, taking her by the arm, said,

“I will break your spirit. Don’t I know where your children are? Men call me ‘the Fox,’ but you surely know that a fox has his tricks. Well, then, I’ll tell you one of his tricks. Pretty soon I will leave you to the care of these soldiers, and then I will go to your house.”

“You’ll do no harm to my little children?” cried the poor woman.

“Not at all!” continued the Fox, with a hypocritical laugh; “but, as I am afraid that it will be rather cold for them, I will provide them with a good fire.”

The woman sighed.

The Fox, too greatly occupied with the object of his vengeance, did not observe what took place behind him, and therefore did not see that one of the soldiers raised his head and seemed to listen to the conversation between these two.

The woman with difficulty lifted herself into a sitting posture; and when she had succeeded in this, she said in a tone of voice trembling with emotion,

“I am in the hands of the Lord, and my children have their angels who will watch over them.”

“Well, we’ll soon see in whose hands you are;

and, as to your children, they won't be likely to tell you how warm a time they had of it."

Then first the woman comprehended what the villain meant, and, uttering a cry, she screamed in despair:

"You will not burn my children?"

"Oh no; I will only just provide the house where they are with a good fire."

"And then?" asked the woman, her bosom heaving with anxiety.

"Well," answered the Fox, "that fire will burn right lustily."

"And my children?"

"Aren't they asleep?"

"But there is no one who can protect them."

"Where are those angels, then?" asked the Fox, mockingly.

The woman's head sank on her bosom.

Meanwhile, the Fox went over to the now-extinguished fire, near which the two soldiers lay on the ground. With the greatest carefulness he listened to their breathing; and when he had convinced himself that they were both asleep, he went back to the woman, sat himself down by her side, and, touching her with his elbow, he said,

"Do you remember how, on a certain evening when you were home alone, about four years ago, and on the day after St. John's, some one knocked at the window-shutter, requesting to be let in?"

The woman nodded assent.

"Do you know what that man came for? But you will have forgotten that. I will tell you: That man had accidentally shot a dog which was the best hunting-dog of the hunter of Rooswyck, your father. Your father," continued the tormentor, without noticing how the woman shuddered, "made this known to the lady of the castle."

"And—?" asked the woman, anxiously awaiting the conclusion.

"The lady ordered the miscreant to be punished."

"Did this take place?"

"Fortunately not, but without the hunter's help. But he who had dared by accident to kill the dog escaped the danger with the intention of at some time taking revenge upon the tale-teller. A fortnight afterward your father fell dead in front of his house."

"Yes; a murderer had shot him in the back."

"Exactly; but that murderer has not yet come to the end of his vengeance, for the tale-teller had a son who succeeded him and a daughter who could not love the murderer. Now do you know the man who knocked at the shutter on a certain evening? Look me well in the face," continued the savage, seizing the woman by the hair. "Do you know me yet?"

The woman screamed. The villain did not observe that the soldier had come nearer.

“And now,” he continued, “you know why I shall deliver you up to the clergy, and why this very night your children—”

The last word he could not utter, for the cry which escaped from the breast of the prisoner was so fearful that Walter shuddered.

The rage of the inhuman villain grew more and more violent, and now, turning into frenzy, he stood up, caught her by the hair, threw her with the most horrible imprecations to the ground, when he was suddenly seized and thrown backward. Quickly he rose to his feet, to see who had dared to touch him, when, to his terror, he saw the musketeer standing before him, who called out to him in broken Dutch, which betrayed the German,

“Stay there, villain, or I shoot you down! A German soldier shall never suffer a coward to insult a defenceless woman, although he is in the service of the duke of Alva.”

The Fox seized his firearm, which stood near, and would certainly have committed a new murder had not the German thrown himself upon the villain under the cry of—

“Ho, comrade! Come to the rescue!”

The other soldier lay plunged in so deep a sleep that he perceived nothing of what took place. The two men fell upon each other, and a violent struggle occurred. The German soldier was, however, no match for the Noortdorp Fox, and after a while the

latter even succeeded in getting the soldier under him, and, drawing forth a broad knife, was about to despatch him, when the other soldier, having waked up and perceiving the danger just in time, threw himself upon the villain and pulled him back. In a moment he was bound and helpless.

“What shall we do with the rascal?” asked the first soldier who had come to the woman’s rescue.

“Let us drag him to the sea and drown him in it like a dog,” replied the other; “he deserves nothing better.”

“No, that will take us too long. I know of something better. If I am not mistaken, we are not far distant from the woods: let us hang the villain. What say you to that?”

“Excellent! For is he not the cause of our having to leave our quiet quarters last night to take this woman prisoner? Therefore let him hang.”

The Fox shook with fear.

“And, as for this woman, we shall leave her here till we come back; it will be daybreak by that time, and so we shall have time enough yet to bring her to the castle at Cleef. Come on!”

The two soldiers ordered their prisoner to advance, but he did not allow himself to be so easily led away. At last they were compelled to tie a long cord between his arms, and so they dragged him through the sand.

When they had gone some distance, Walter crept out of his hiding-place, to the great terror of the woman, who naturally feared that a new enemy was about to assail her ; but when Walter told her who he was, she rejoiced greatly and thanked God for his mercy. In a moment the cords which bound her were cut loose by Walter, and under cover of the night they both hastened across the sandhills to Wyk-on-the-Sea, in the neighborhood of which stood the dwelling of the rescued mother. How happy she was when she saw the house ! She spread out her arms toward it, for presently she would see her children again, who had been exposed to such great danger, and who had indeed been surrounded by a guard of angels.

When the joyful mother opened the door in the company of Walter, she saw both her darlings sunk, arm in arm, into a deep sleep. In the great gladness of her heart she waked the children and pressed them to her heart, praising God for his faithful care. However, here she could not remain long, for the persecutors who had taken her prisoner would certainly find her. But where were they to go ? These parts had become during the last eight days so unsafe by reason of the Spanish soldiery sent out by Don Frederick, the Spanish commander, upon reconnoitring expeditions, that most dwellings had been forsaken. The poor woman knew not whither to flee with her little children. Her strength, also,

was exhausted, and an overpowering sleep so took hold upon her that she could scarcely keep her feet.

Walter, too, was so wearied with his persecutions and wanderings that he felt little desire again to wander up and down the sandhills. After a few moments' reflection the boy said,

"I know what to do: let us put our trust in God. I remember very well that when I saw father for the last time he told me, 'Dear Walter, when man knows of no deliverance in his own strength, the best help then remains. That best help is God, for unto him belong even the issues from death.' Therefore, since we neither may nor can rely upon ourselves or upon others, we must commit ourselves unto the Lord. I think it best for us that we sleep here this night, if it were but for a few hours; to-morrow we can see further."

"But the soldiers, then?"

"Oh, if God preserves us, the Spanish soldiers can do us no harm even though the king of Spain himself come with all his army. Cannot God build a wall around about us, so that the enemy cannot see us?"

"I am ashamed at my lack of faith," said the woman, drawing Walter toward her and kissing the boy on the forehead. "But your example does me good; I feel it. God grant that he may ever follow you and me with his mercy! But you must be

hungry," she continued, looking upon him with motherly affection.

Walter's face brightened ; and when, a few moments later, the woman brought him a good piece of bread and ham, he ate as heartily as a boy of his age whose stomach had long been craving in vain could well be expected to eat. Then she showed him where he could comfortably lie down to sleep, and, returning to her children, she soon fell asleep herself, wearied and exhausted as she was.

But the poor lad, after all the exertions and anxieties of the day, was not permitted to enjoy an undisturbed night's rest. Scarcely had he slept an hour when he suddenly awoke. It seemed to him as if some one had called him several times by name. He looked around, but, seeing no one, he was on the point of lying down again, when he seemed to hear the sound once more. An unaccountable dread took hold of him. He could no longer endure it in bed, and, supposing that the woman, who was in the lower part of the house, needed his help, he dressed himself quickly and went down stairs as softly as possible. But the mother was sleeping quietly between her children ; these, therefore, did not want his assistance. Nevertheless, he was confident that some one had called him by name ; but who ? Could there be some one outside waiting for him ? This could not be, for who knew that he was in that house ? He had little desire

to leave the house, and yet there was in him a strange feeling of fear and uneasiness that left him no rest. Listening to this, he softly withdrew the bolts, opened the door, and was soon outside.

The early-morning red glowed upon the tops of the sandhills, but, so far as Walter could see, he could not recollect having ever been here before. He carefully walked toward a wood which stretched itself before him. At the entrance of the wood he heard a moaning sound which seemed to come from the thickest portion. His heart beat loudly when he heard this, and he was on the point of running back to the sandhills, but that uneasiness which had possessed him during the last hour suffered him not to do so. He penetrated more and more deeply into the wood; and the louder the groans became, the more he hastened his steps. The underbrush greatly hindered his progress, but he minded this little; on the contrary, whatever the difficulties in his way, his restlessness did not permit him to think of danger. Yet a few bounds over some small trunks and fallen trees, and he reached an open place where the trees almost formed a square. Now the sound became louder; and when he looked carefully around, he saw, by the first sunbeams which lit up this portion of the wood, the Noortdorp Fox.

In what a distressful state the man was! He lay with his face in the underbrush, his body bend-

ing across a fallen tree, unable to stir, for his arms were fastened behind his back and his feet bound close together. Round his neck hung a rope in the form of a noose. It was evident that the Fox owed his life only to the brittleness of the branch to which it had been tied. From the confusion round about him, it could be seen that the Fox had tried to lift himself up and to creep away on his knees, but he was probably prevented by pain.

Walter was much affected; he knew not at first what to do. He found himself in the presence of one who was his mortal enemy, who had betrayed his grandfather and probably brought his father to the scaffold, and who, if he could, would undoubtedly deliver him to the Spaniards. What should he do now? Should he leave his enemy to his fate, to certain death? as he must perish of want in this condition.

Walter stood still, for he dared not go farther. The man who lay there helpless had awakened such fear within him that the sight of him alone was enough to fill him with consternation. For an instant he hesitated; for an instant he thought, "Now he is in my power; I can now revenge myself upon him." There was a moment when he grasped his dagger, but it was only for a moment. In the next another groan struck his ear, and he ventured to approach the man by a

few steps. At a distance of four paces, however, he remained standing, and coughed a few times to let the Fox know there was some one near.

"Any one there?" said the Fox, in a pitiful tone, trying to lift his face and look in the direction from which the noise came.

"Yes," said Walter, softly.

"Who is it?" asked the Fox.

"Walter Harmsen."

The Fox quivered with fright.

"Walter Harmsen," repeated the lad, thinking that the man had not understood him.

"The son of the heretic?" the Fox was going to say, but he quickly corrected himself, as he would just now rather hide his foxskin under sheep's wool.

"The son of the old Harmsen who lives back of Beverwyk?" asked the Fox.

"Who did live there," in his turn corrected Walter, a little sternly.

The man held his breath and hid his face still farther amid the underbrush, in spite of the sharp thorns which tore his skin.

"He was sold to the Spaniards by a spy," continued Walter, paying no heed to this, "and my aged grandfather is now—"

Suddenly the Fox turned himself. The villain had not laid aside his wiles, and he completed Walter's sentence:

"Your grandfather is in safety."

"'In safety'!" repeated Walter, in ecstasy, going a step nearer. "Where is he?"

"Close by Haarlem. Your grandfather has nothing to fear, for he is under my protection."

"Under your protection?" asked Walter, who looked at the Fox in astonishment.

The villain braved the questioning look of the lad, and added,

"Yes, he is under my protection, and no harm shall befall him."

"But," said Walter, looking suspiciously at the Fox, "Aggie told me that—"

"I thought so," interrupted the spy; "I thought they wanted to throw the blame upon me again. I am not guilty."

"Then it was not you who betrayed my grandfather?"

"Oh, of course not," answered the Fox, with the most innocent face in the world.

"And you say you are free from the charge?"

"I am. Oh, these thick ropes! They pinch me so!" he continued, looking imploringly at Walter.

"Have you a knife to cut them with?"

"Yes, but—"

"Do you fear me yet? Well, I will patiently suffer my undeserved lot, and first tell you what has happened to your grandfather; then you will no doubt have pity upon me. I suppose you know that

the Romish clergy will not suffer any one to accept the Reformed faith, and still less to read the Bible?"

"Oh yes, I know that but too well."

"Well, all those who are accused of doing this, and are convicted, deserve death."

"In the eyes of the Spanish tyrants," said Walter, with fervor, "but not in the eyes of God."

"Certainly, certainly!" said the Fox, feigning assent. "But let me continue. I had for a long time known that your grandfather had a Bible in the house and read from it; I had also learned that he stood on the list of those who were to be taken prisoner for doing so. I liked your grandfather, and therefore I resolved to save him. Oh, these cords! They pinch terribly!"

Walter advanced another step, and the Fox went on:

"I feared that some one might frustrate my plan, and therefore I went one day to two of my friends, whom I persuaded to disguise themselves as priests. These went to a Spanish captain with the request to let them have some soldiers to capture that heretic, as they called your grandfather."

"And so my grandfather was, after all, delivered up to the Spaniards?" asked Walter, with emotion.

"This was only in appearance; it was the only way in which he could be saved. I had arranged with my friends to have him brought to a house that was known to us, and then to let him escape."

“And when will that happen?” Walter asked, again advancing a step, so that he stood close by the Fox.

“It has happened already. Yesterday afternoon your grandfather escaped under the disguise of a Spanish soldier.”

“‘Escaped’!” Walter exclaimed, and his face beamed for joy at the word. But, suddenly remembering that he had heard just the contrary, he asked the Fox, “Is that true? Oh, if I but had a proof of that!”

“I can furnish that at once. But these ropes prevent me.”

“Where is that proof?”

“I have it on my person; your grandfather wrote me some words of gratitude with his own hand. Oh, these cords!”

“Did my grandfather write it himself?”

“Do you know his handwriting?”

“Certainly! certainly!”

“Well, then, loose me, and you shall have the writing.”

The innocent lad suspected nothing. He forgot that he had to do with a fox in human shape. In a moment the sharp dagger was in his hand, and with great rapidity he cut the cords which bound the arms of the villain. As soon as the Fox was relieved from his bonds he rose up and sat down upon the fallen tree. He came near fainting from

the effects of his pain, but after a little his powers came back to him.

"I am glad you are better," said Walter, busily cutting the remaining cords.

The Fox gave no answer, but watched him closely; and no sooner had Walter cut the last strand than by a quick movement the Fox struck the dagger out of the lad's hand and seized him unexpectedly by the throat.

Walter grew pale; then indignation made the blood rush to his head. Seizing the Fox by the head with both hands, he pulled him by the hair with one hand and scratched him so terribly in the face with the other that the villain was compelled to let his young antagonist go. At this moment Walter saw his dagger lying on the ground, and, bending down swift as thought, he waved his dagger high in the air, and in this attitude awaited his enemy.

But the Fox was not the man to fear a boy. Although he trembled with rage and a malicious expression curled about his lips, he laughed outright when he saw Walter stand before him in such a threatening attitude.

"Ho, ho, manikin! Would you defend yourself?" he said, mockingly. "Wait a while; I'll attend to you in a moment. Such bad boys as you are—" He looked around for a cudgel to ward off Walter's dagger; and when he had found one, and

had armed himself with it, he walked straight upon the boy, swinging the stick about him.

But the latter did not wait for his murderer. Quickly bending down, he took up a handful of earth and threw it into the Fox's face. The villain was forced to desist a moment from the encounter, but before he had wiped the earth out of his eyes Walter threw a clod, which did not, however, hit the mark. The Fox roared with fury, forgot the lad's dagger and rushed upon him. Walter stumbled and fell; the villain threw himself upon him. Walter did not lose his presence of mind; he struck at the Fox with his dagger and cut a deep gash in his arm. Raging with pain, the spy struck him in the face with both fists. But Walter thought not of the pain: he could not see his enemy, but he held the dagger firmly in his hand, and tried to strike the Fox again. The latter, however, seized the weapon, forced it from the youthful hand and flung it away.

"Now you are in my power, heretic!" he roared; and, holding both the lad's hands in his left hand, he struck him some violent blows, so that his head sunk unconsciously upon his breast.

The Fox now released his victim, which he was forced to do from the pain in his own arm. The blood streamed through his sleeve, and, rolling up the wide sleeve, he saw the gaping wound which Walter's knife had dealt him. There was no time

to lose; he tore a piece of linen from his underclothes and bound the wound as well as he could.

“And now it is your turn,” he muttered, approaching the unconscious Walter. “But what shall I do with him?” he said, seeing that the lad appeared more dead than alive. “I may not kill him, for I must keep my vow to deliver the heretics to the Holy Inquisition. I cannot drag him to Haarlem; I will take him a little distance from this spot and fasten him to a tree. If he dies, well then it isn’t my fault; if he revives, he will not run away. Meanwhile, I’ll go and get assistance from Noortdorp.”

The Fox was as good as his word. He dragged the boy a little farther into the wood and bound him fast with his own cords to one of the trees.

A few moments later the Fox left the place, and, in spite of the pain he suffered, he soon reached the sandhills.

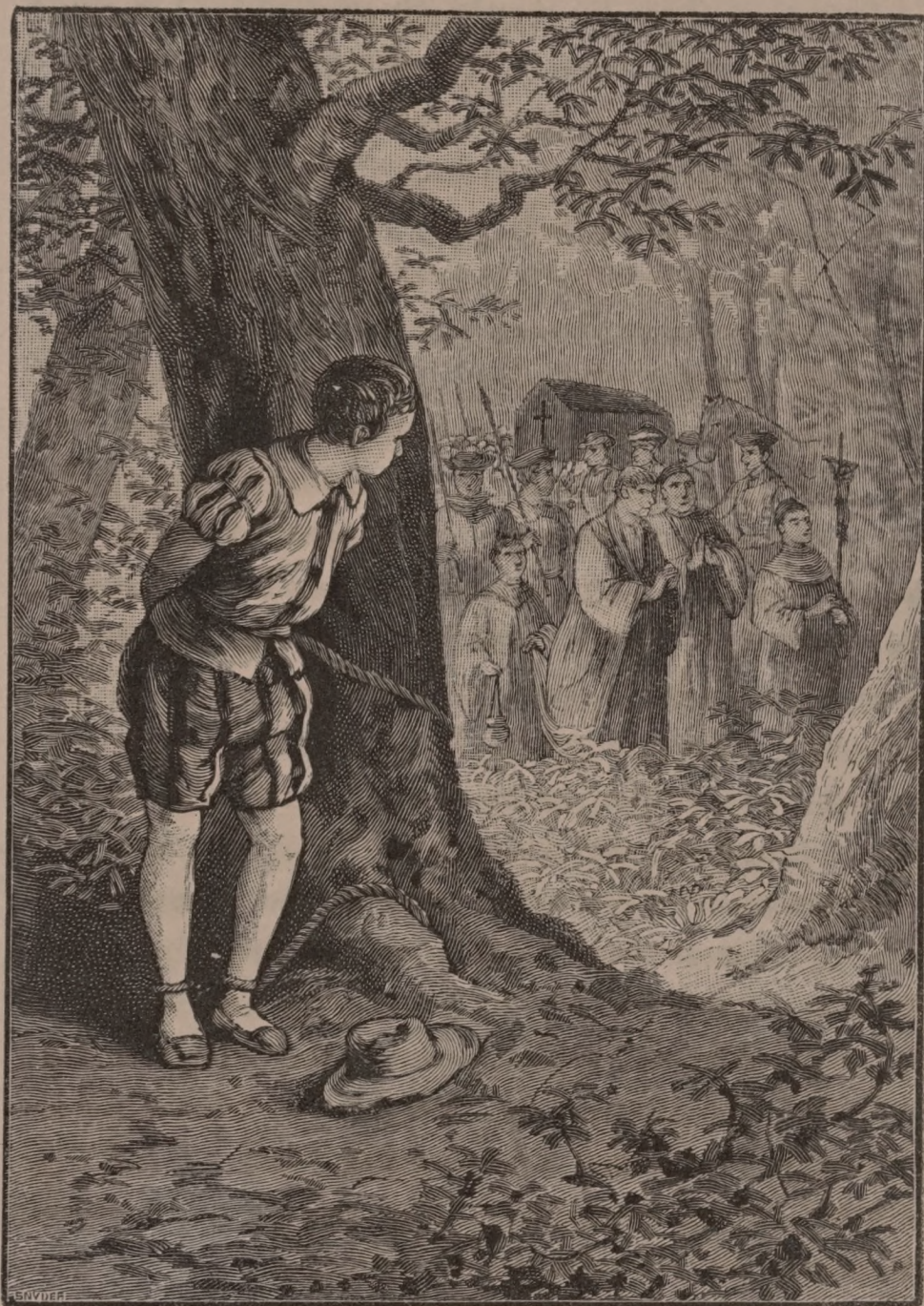
CHAPTER V.

STRANGE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS.

WALTER, the victim of the wicked Fox, had been stunned by the cruel blows which the villain had dealt him. It was more than ten minutes after the latter left before Walter regained consciousness. The first feeling of which his consciousness made him aware was that of great pain, which was increased by the pinching of the cords where-with the man had bound him to the tree. His head had suffered much, and with difficulty could he open his eyes, for the blood which flowed from one of the wounds. Gradually, however, he succeeded in opening them, and, to his sorrow, he perceived that he was in a spot where people came very rarely. All manner of thoughts rose within him. He recalled the horrible scene that presented itself to him in his grandfather's house. He thought with horror of the sad death of Aggie, and he was sorry that he had not as yet had the opportunity of fulfilling her last wish. What must become of him? He understood that he was in the power of the abettor of the Spaniards, and he must

expect every moment to see the villain return, and he knew that then he would be treated as his poor grandfather had been. He directed his glances heavenward, but he could not see the blue sky. The oaks and beeches were so lofty that at this place they formed a leafy roof which did not permit the least sunbeam to penetrate it. But, though for the moment he could not see the heavens, he well knew that above that leafy roof, above that blue sky, there dwelt a Lord who regarded the poor persecuted orphan. This thought comforted him. A sigh, a prayer, rose upward from his anxious heart. He besought the Lord to free him from his bonds, that opportunity might be given him to leave this unsafe region and to flee along the coast to South Holland, and there, if possible, to obtain some news about his father. Thus he prayed and thought.

Suddenly he heard the sound of a singing multitude. His heart beat loudly, for he thought it was the Fox accompanied by some Spanish soldiers. He could see nothing, for he was so bound that his back was turned to the road. The singing continued, and was occasionally interrupted by the clear sound of a bell. The voices came nearer and nearer, and distinctly he perceived now that it was one of the chants which he formerly had heard in a Romish church. The voices seemed to come from the south, and, curious to know what this



Walter sees the Funeral Procession.

could be, he used every exertion to bend himself a little to the left, in order to see who or what it was that was going along the road at this early morning hour.

It was a long procession. At its head went a choir-boy wrapped in a long white robe and bearing a large black cross with the image of the Saviour. About four paces behind him came two priests decked in full robes, followed by two other choir-boys, who carried the trains of the priestly garments in their left hands, while their right held the chains of the censers which they waved continually. Behind these came some foot-soldiers armed with spears trimmed with mourning-ribbons. Next followed twelve men, who carried a coffin draped with a long black pall. Walter could not see what arms were embroidered on it, as his inconvenient posture did not permit him to do so. Behind these pall-bearers a squire led a saddled horse trapped with long black fringes. The animal was, no doubt, the favorite riding-horse of the noble lord who was being borne to his last resting-place. But it seemed to take no part in the general mourning, for it threw its proud head up and down, shaking its black plume violently to and fro. It was now some few moments before Walter could see anything further, but soon he perceived a number of noble-women dressed in all the splendor of those days. This whole pro-

cession was closed by some peasants and yeomen, who were, doubtless, retainers of the nobleman.

The procession passed by, no one observing the captive boy. The sound of the bell and the chant of the priests for a long while fell upon his ear. He had wisely refrained from making his presence known; for it was evident that the persons who were passing by did not belong to his friends. He wondered who was that nobleman of whose funeral-procession he had been the involuntary witness. He was, indeed, acquainted with some of the possessors of the castles and noblemen's houses in the vicinity, but lately he had rather avoided these; so that he was not certain whose funeral this could have been.

As he was thinking upon this he heard near him the voices of two persons in conversation with each other. He bent once more in the direction of the road, and perceived a maiden of about twenty years who was supporting a feeble old man. The aged man, bowed by the weight of years, leaned with the right arm upon the shoulder of his companion, while his left hand held a stick, which assisted him in walking. The maiden moved very slowly, for walking seemed difficult to the old man.

When they had come to within a short distance of the place where Walter was bound, he heard the aged man say to the maiden,

“It is impossible for me to go farther; I feel that

my strength is exhausted. Do you not see a place where I can sit down and rest myself?"

"I see a fallen tree yonder, Father Baldwin," said the maiden, pointing to a tree which lay close by the one to which Walter stood bound. "Come!" she continued, gently conducting him toward it. "I will seat myself by you; then you can rest as long as you please."

Walter heard the leaves and branches crushed under their feet, and soon he heard again, but more distinctly than before, the voice of the old man addressing the maiden:

"I thank you, dear child; you have done me a great favor. No one took pity on me but you. Were it not that I had you, I could not have followed my lord and master to the grave. Ah! you know not, dear Grada, how much I suffered at his death." The old man bent his head upon the stick and continued: "I saw him born, and my arm has carried him many a time. I trained him in the use of arms; and when he was twenty years old, we went together to the French court, where he enjoyed the favor of the knightly King Francis I. Afterward we returned hither, and my lord wedded the daughter of Lord Van Sassenheim, with whom he lived happily till his death. And now—"

"But, dear Father Baldwin," interrupted the young maiden, "why these sad remembrances? You distress yourself too greatly."

"I shall weep for him, Grada, till I go down to my grave."

"Hush!" said Grada, taking the old man by the hand; "I hear the mass for the dead."

Reverentially the maiden kneeled, and remained in this posture until she could no longer hear the chant of the priests. Then she stood up, the old man, meanwhile, having remained seated in silence during her devout attention.

"Grada," he commenced anew, "it is now seven days since Lord Van Westerhout died; and if my presentiments deceive me not, I shall soon follow him. Alas! I may not rest at his side. A grave in the chapel awaits him, but no doubt my body will rest among the sandhills. But I pray you remember what I am going to tell you. A secret oppresses me. I have never yet dared to speak it, and still I dare not take it with me to the grave. I trust you, for I know that you will keep it faithfully. Will you not?"

The maiden nodded assent.

"Well, then," continued the aged man, "listen carefully. You know the small hunting-tower to the south of our castle? But seldom was it used, for the deceased lord rarely hunted. You will, however, recollect how about two years ago the late abbot of Egmond, accompanied by horsemen and spearmen, came into the castle on a certain evening. In the midst of them there was a

stranger; his hands were bound, but nevertheless he carried his head proudly. There was something calm, and yet noble, in the expression of that man's countenance; and had not the cords betrayed his captive condition, certainly, from his bearing, one would not have thought him a prisoner. An hour after the man had come into the castle I was summoned by my lord. He was seated in a wide arm-chair, and his face looked pale and emaciated, for the disease which has brought him to his grave was undermining him even then. Over-against him sat the abbot, in strong contrast to my master. No sooner had I entered than the abbot spoke to me.

“‘Baldwin,’ he said, ‘I have brought a prisoner here. He is one of the most dangerous of the enemies of our holy Church, for he goes all over the land, excites the peasantry against the lawful count, the king of Spain, despises our sacred mass, utters all manner of slanders against the priests, and teaches the people an entirely different doctrine from what we preach. We have succeeded in capturing this arch-heretic, and we have thought of keeping him here till we have consulted with the court of the Holy Inquisition. Lord Van Westerhout wishes to confine him till then in the hunting-tower, and you are appointed to guard him. You will take care that he does not escape, and you will bring him his bread and water daily, although I

will not count it to you as a sin if you forget it occasionally. Do you understand?"

"My master wished to add something, but a dry cough prevented him; so I bowed and withdrew. Outside the room stood the prisoner. He looked upon me with friendly eyes. I commanded the soldiers to let the man follow me, and soon I descended with him the broad stairway which led to the dungeon in the hunting-tower. I unlocked the heavy iron door, pointed the man to his future abode, cut his cords and left him. A few moments later I returned and brought him bread and water, besides an armful of straw. I bade him good-night and left him alone.

"That night I was to sleep for the first time in the little round room which was just above the apartment of the prisoner; but, in whatever way I turned me on my bed, I could not succeed in falling asleep. The prisoner rose continually before my mind. I saw his noble features, and the expression of his kind and friendly eye was constantly before me. All were asleep in the castle; the most deathly stillness reigned everywhere. My prisoner alone seemed not yet asleep. It seemed to me as if he were talking aloud, and, curious to know with whom he could be conversing, I quickly dressed myself and went down without making any noise. Advancing carefully, I at length reached the door of his prison. Through the keyhole I could

see the moon pouring her light through the barred window, and distinctly I perceived the man turning his face upward, and heard him say,

“‘O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me. Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins. My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.’

“You wonder, dear Grada,” continued the old man, while he wiped away the tears which trickled down his cheeks—“you wonder how I have remembered all these words; but it will become plainer to you presently. But do I not hear something? I feel certain that I heard a rustling noise among the trees.”

Grada had listened too intently to the old servant of the castle to have heard anything else. Had she arisen to see what had occasioned the rustling, she would certainly have discovered our Walter. He too had listened eagerly, for he had a certain presentiment, as if what the old man related in some way affected himself. But it was very difficult for him to remain standing. The cords pinched him very much, and in changing his position a little he rubbed his back against the tree, whereby he loosened some pieces of bark, which fell among the underbrush. This it was which Baldwin had heard, but, as his companion had heard nothing, he

attributed the noise to a hare that ran by. He turned again to Grada and continued:

“With astonishment I heard these words of the prisoner, and, desirous of hearing more, I kept my ear at the keyhole. A few minutes later I heard these words:

“‘The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies. Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice.’

“He was silent for a few moments. My eye sought him; he yet stood with his face upturned. He next walked up and down the floor of his cell a few times. Then he removed his outer garment, felt with his hand about his body, and drew forth some book-leaves, which he read by the light of the moon. He occupied about ten minutes with this, then concealed the leaves once more, put on the outer garment and threw himself on his knees. He prayed. Never shall I forget the words which I heard from his lips.”

The old man became silent a while, drew his hand across his forehead, and breathed with difficulty.

“And what did the prisoner pray?” asked Grada, who had listened very attentively.

The old man looked around, and, as if he feared that some one might hear him, he bent over to the maiden and said so softly that Walter could with difficulty hear it,

“Listen carefully, and remember it even as I have remembered it during these two years. The prisoner knelt and prayed,

“‘Lord Jesus—’”

At these words the maiden devoutly crossed herself.

“‘Lord Jesus,’” continued the old man, repeating the prisoner’s words, “‘thou wast delivered for our transgressions; thou didst die on the cross the death that we deserved. But thou, Lord God, didst so love the world that thou gavest thine only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This thou hast, O Lord, revealed unto me of thy mercy, and thy word, the Bible, has taught me the precious truth that there is now no condemnation for him that believeth on Jesus Christ. That truth was long hid from me, for thy word lay in chains, and Rome’s priests suffered not that the perishing people should learn the precious truth. But eternal thanks be unto thee, Lord God, that thou hast brought me out of darkness into thy marvelous light! Now I know that Jesus Christ is my Saviour and my justification. O Lord my God, hear my prayer! The wicked have cast me into this prison; Lord, suffer not that they

should do me hurt. Thou hast delivered me from darkness: deliver me now from the hands of men. Be near unto me. Be also near unto my child, my son, whom I love. What dangers may not threaten him? Thou alone knowest. But how great soever that peril may be, O Lord, hear the prayer of thy servant, and preserve him and suffer him not to go astray from sound doctrine. Thy will be done. Amen.'"

The old man was completely overcome when he had spoken these words. He hid his face in his hands and sobbed aloud, so deeply seemed the recollection of the prisoner's prayer to have affected him. His companion was not less moved. Now and then, indeed, she had trembled when Rome's priests were alluded to, but Baldwin's simple story, compassion for the poor man in the dungeon, the new strange words which she had heard,—all this had made such an impression upon her heart that her eyes too had filled with tears.

And Walter? When he heard the old man repeat the words of the prisoner, "Be nigh also unto my child, my son," it seemed to him as if a voice told him, "They are the words of your father." Still, he kept himself quiet; for, in spite of the pain from his wounds and the cords, he was anxious to learn something further about the prisoner.

“And what happened more, dear Father Baldwin?” asked the maiden.

The aged man raised his head and looked questioningly at her, as if he would read in her eyes what effect his words had had upon her. Satisfied upon this point, he took her by the hand and said,

“I knew, Grada, that I would not be deceived in you; I know that you take an interest in all that concerns me, and you rightly suspect that what follows stands in close relation to myself. I will therefore continue. When I heard these words of the prisoner, it seemed to me as if they were new and glad tidings; they sank into my heart. Tears filled my eyes. I was still at the keyhole—or, rather, I had kneeled down and was leaning with my head against the door. How long I had thus been kneeling I know not, but at length I heard the prisoner approach the door and whisper,

“‘Is any one there?’

“This wakened me from my seemingly unconscious condition. I reflected, and remained for a moment undecided what to do; but I could not repress my burning desire to converse with the prisoner.

“‘Hush!’ I replied, taking care that my voice was heard by him alone.

“With the utmost caution I turned the key in the lock and entered his dungeon.”

Walter’s heart beat violently; he controlled him-

self with difficulty. He prayed the Lord to give him strength to endure his painful position a little longer.

Baldwin continued :

“ The prisoner stood with his arms folded upon his breast. At that moment I could see little of his face, for, whether he did so purposely or not, he stood at my entrance where the moonlight could not reach him. I had locked the door after me, and held the keys in my hand. I was there under greatly embarrassing circumstances, and I knew not what to say. The prisoner, indeed, observed this himself, and, approaching me, he asked,

“ ‘ With what intent have you come to disturb me in my prayer? Did your master command you to bring me before the priests, or to convey me in secret to Amsterdam in order to torture me there? Well, I am prepared.’

“ I could make no reply, and shook my head.

“ ‘ Why do you yet hesitate?’ again inquired the prisoner. ‘ At least tell me the purpose of your coming?’

“ ‘ I heard a noise in your cell,’ I answered, at last, ‘ and wished to know what it was.’

“ ‘ And—?’ asked the prisoner.

“ ‘ Your prayer touched me.’

“ ‘ My prayer?’

“ ‘ Yes, your prayer,’ I repeated, gaining courage.

“The prisoner advanced a few steps toward me. The moonlight now shone brightly upon his pale features. He held his eyes fixedly upon me, and, laying his hand on mine, he said with an earnest voice, but with a benignity which I shall never forget,

“‘Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Dost thou believe that thou art a miserable sinner who can receive the forgiveness of sins alone by his blood, through his cross?’

“I was dumb. I could find no words; it seemed as though my voice would choke in giving my emotions utterance.

“The prisoner continued:

“‘Dost thou feel thyself to be lost without the Lord Jesus Christ? Dost thou know any other way of salvation except in him? Knowest thou that thou mayest be his now and to eternity?’

“I could no longer keep my feet, but, falling upon my knees, I cried out,

“‘Oh, sir, what must I do to be saved?’

“The prisoner took both of my hands in his, and, lifting me up, he said,

“‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. All that the Lord requires of you is to believe in him, to rest on him.’

“‘But how may I attain that belief?’ I asked, with tremulous voice.

“‘It is the gift of God, my friend. If you

pray to him for it, he will not withhold it from you.'

"The prisoner wished to say more, but at this moment I heard the sound of a trumpet announcing that some one wished to be admitted to the castle. Quickly I rose and pressed his hand, and, whispering to him, 'Till to-morrow evening,' I hurriedly left the prison and betook myself to the gate."

The old man drew a deep sigh and wiped the perspiration from the forehead. Grada threw her left arm about him to give him some support. After resting a few moments he continued:

"I visited him the next morning, accompanied by a servant, who carried a flask of water, with some bread. Without speaking a word I set these articles before the prisoner and departed with the servant. That whole day I saw him not again, for fear of being watched; but when evening had fallen and all was quiet at the castle, I once more crept through the long hall, opened the dungeon, and found myself in the presence of the man who had something so peculiarly attractive for me. I sat at his feet like a child by his father, listening to all that he said. Oh, Grada, would that you knew how happy I have become since that conversation!"

The aged man ceased speaking. The recollection of this important occurrence had so filled him with

emotion that he was compelled to take a few moments' rest.

Grada knew nothing about these things; she had never heard anything except what the Romish Church had taught her. She knew, indeed, a long list of saints, but that *one* holy One had never found a place within her soul, because she felt no need. Still, all that Baldwin was relating filled her with concern, and therefore she could not refrain from asking,

"How long did the prisoner remain in his prison?"

The old man was a little startled at hearing this question, but, soon recovering himself, he said,

"The next morning the prisoner had disappeared—"

"'Disappeared'!" interrupted Grada. "Had he escaped? and did some one assist him?"

"Ask me not, dear child," said the old man; "I can only tell you that the prisoner escaped by means of a hidden passage-way which opened into the hunting-tower. When, on the next afternoon, I entered with some soldiers to take him away, he was not there. We could easily trace the manner of his escape, for in the south corner of the tower stood an open trapdoor which led to a staircase. The soldiers ascended the steps to see if the prisoner had concealed himself in some other place, but after spending fully an hour in searching they returned;

and we had to inform the abbot, who was with my master, that the prisoner had found a way of escape. You may imagine with what fury he received this information. He struck the table with clenched hand and said, 'That I must see myself before I will believe that this heretic has escaped.' And, indeed, he went with us, but, having reached the trapdoor in the dungeon, he was forced to interrupt his search; for, unfortunately for himself, the abbot was so fat that the narrow opening was too small for him. In his rage he hurled all manner of invectives at me and threatened me with great punishment for my lack of watchfulness. But when I came to my master, I noticed by his countenance that this would not be so heavily visited upon me. The soldiers were, indeed, ordered to search the castle from top to bottom, but the prisoner was away, and stayed away. One thing, however, he had left behind him in his prison. He had scratched upon the wall with a nail or some other sharp instrument the following words: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' Beneath this was his name."

"And what was it?"

"Hush, child, hush!" said the old man; "that name may not be spoken aloud here. A great price is set upon the head of that man, and whoever can point out where he lives, or can take him captive, receives a large sum of money."

"But will you not tell *me* the name?" asked Grada, whose interest in the man was growing.

The old man first looked carefully around; and when he saw that they were alone, he said, half whispering to Grada, but yet audible to Walter,

"The prisoner's name was Ralph Harmsen."

In the same instant they heard close by them a cry which caused Grada to spring up, while the old man let fall his stick; and before they had the opportunity to recover from their fright they distinctly heard the words,

"I thank thee, O God, that thou didst deliver my father from the hands of his enemies!"

Baldwin and his youthful companion looked at each other in astonishment, and it was some few minutes before the old man could come to any decision. Then he grasped Grada's hand, and, directing his eyes toward the place whence the sound had come, he cried with trembling voice,

"Is any one there who knows us?"

No answer came. Baldwin repeated, somewhat more distinctly, the same words; but only the rustling of the oak-leaves gave answer to his question.

The old man considered a few moments; he looked at Grada, as if expecting from her lips advice how to act; but Grada only shrugged her shoulders, while her face betokened anxiety. Baldwin hesitated a second or two, but, directing a glance heavenward, as if expecting the best coun-

sel thence, he arose and went to that part of the woods from whence he had first heard the cry. But scarcely had he advanced ten steps when it was his turn to utter a cry of astonishment, for he saw a lad bound with strong cords to a tree, and evidently unconscious.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WORD OF GOD IN FRAGMENTS.

THE sun was near setting, but was still lighting the tops of the trees which surrounded a small dwelling-house in the vicinity of the old hunting-castle which belonged to the deceased lord of Westerhout. This dwelling looked quite dilapidated, but had all that attractively rustic appearance about it which we so delight to notice in old houses. It had but one window, with small panes of glass set in lead, and, according to the then prevailing custom, painted in several places. The evening sun shone in through the window and gave just sufficient light to allow one to view the objects in the room. Opposite this window stood a bedstead, and in this, in a half-sitting, half-reclining posture, could plainly be perceived the form of some one who seemed engaged in reading. At least, he had in his hand a piece of paper which was, indeed, torn in many places, but was evidently serviceable still. Presently he folded the leaf, drew his hand across his forehead, and then, directing his

glance toward the window to see as much as possible of the sky, he said,

“O Lord, thou lookest from heaven and behold-est all the sons of men. Thou seest me also, and thou hast not willed that my enemy should hold me in his power. Thine eye wast upon me when I was in great danger. Be still further with me; all that thou doest is well done. Thou hast let me hear something about my father again. O Lord, be nigh unto him, and once more bring me to him that I may see him after whom my heart yearns so greatly.”

A noise was heard near. Walter—for the reader has, no doubt, recognized our young friend—quickly concealed the papers in his waistcoat and laid his head upon the pillow. He had rightly heard, for the noise came nearer, and some minutes later the door of the apartment was opened and the aged Baldwin entered. He cautiously approached Walter’s couch, drew the green curtain a little aside and looked upon the lad.

“I am not asleep, Baldwin,” said Walter. “I have been awake about an hour, and have been waiting for you. Could you not come sooner?”

“I had much to do,” answered he. “This afternoon we learned that the Spaniards intend marching upon Alkmaar along this road, and so I had many things to attend to for my mistress, who wishes to leave these parts as soon as possible. But no one

knows you are here except Grada and her brother Dirk, and I have confidence in them that they will not betray you."

"I do not believe they will, dear Baldwin," said the boy, "but it would be very agreeable to me to be able to go away from here as early as possible, especially since, as you say, the road to Wyk-upon-the-Sea is safer now; and from that place I could follow the seashore, and so reach the neighborhood of Leyden, and then go to Delft, where perhaps my father at present is."

"It would be well, Walter," said the old man, "if you could have one more day's rest; Dirk can then accompany you as far as the strand. Besides, your hands and feet have suffered too much. How are you at present?"

"Oh, I thank you, much better. The salve which Grada brought has done me much good. I feel only a slight itching, and hope, with God's help, soon to be perfectly well. Have you heard nothing of the Noortdorp Fox?"

The old man frowned at the mention of this detested name, and replied,

"About an hour ago I heard from one of the servants that the Noortdorp Fox, as you call him, was at the castle and wished to be admitted. Entrance, however, was refused him, for there is no one here who loves him."

"I wonder what he has in view now? It cannot

be that he has found out that I am here?" asked Walter.

"I believe not," was the answer; "but what would it matter? He can do you no harm here. I am, indeed, an old man, and alone, but I will keep a watchful eye. Dirk, also, has promised me that he will presently visit you. Be assured I will warn you in time when danger threatens. You do not fear?"

"Oh no, Father Baldwin. I know that no one can harm me without the will of God. But tell me," he continued: "was my father in good health? Did he not complain? Did he not say one word about me? Oh, Baldwin, if you knew how much I love him, you would repeat to me every word which he spoke to you."

The aged man reflected a while, and then said,

"Now I recollect the last words which he spoke to me. He said, 'Baldwin, I came by way of Enkhuizen and Alkmaar to inquire after my father and my child in these regions. It does not seem to be the Lord's will that I should see them at present, but I have prayed the Lord. He will preserve my son and confirm him in the faith; he will not suffer him to depart from the Lord's word, and I trust that he will let me see him once more.'"

The tears streamed down Walter's cheeks when he heard these words, and it was some minutes before he recovered his composure:

"Why did you not tell me this before, Baldwin?"

"Could I have done this? We found you in a critical situation. After I had succeeded in cutting the ropes, you fell unconscious into Grada's arms. You were not in a condition to hear anything of this kind."

"Oh, I thank you greatly, dear Baldwin," Walter interrupted. "How can I ever repay you?"

"That is unnecessary," answered the old man; "I am infinitely obliged to your father. He, indeed, it was who made known to me something I knew not before, but which now is my greatest delight. Moreover, your father gave me half of what he possessed of God's word, as he called the Bible, and which I have since learned it to be."

"Have you that still?" asked Walter.

The old man said nothing, but went to the door, opened it, looked outside, closed and locked it.

"We cannot be too heedful," he said; "we are surrounded by many persons who think they render God service when they betray such as have a Bible in their possession, were it but part of one." He thereupon went to the side of the bedstead and opened a little closet, from which he took some papers rolled together. "See," he said, "what I received from your father. It is a pity that the evening is close upon us; otherwise, you might read. This part is the Epistle to the Romans, but

only to the end of the eighth chapter. But what a precious close it is, is it not? Oh, Walter, how well it is for us to know in truth what the apostle says in the last two verses!"

"I do not remember," said Walter. "Can you repeat them to me?"

The old man said with earnest voice which yet betokened a certain joyousness,

"'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

"Yes," said Walter, "it is indeed true, as you said, that it is well for us to know this. Nothing—no one—can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus."

"I, at least, am heartily glad and happy," continued Baldwin, "that I know this. Formerly I knew nothing of that love. I indeed faithfully attended mass in church, but the prayers which I heard there or which I offered myself were only to persons outside of Jesus. Now I know that I have no need of a mediator or a priest between him and me in order to come to him. Nothing separates me from God's love."

Meanwhile, Walter had succeeded in finding this portion of the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the

Romans, and, using every effort to catch the few beams of light that remained, he said,

“There is something further here, Father Baldwin, about love.”

“How does it begin?”

“‘Who shall separate—’”

“Oh, I know what it is,” interrupted the old man: “‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?’ I wish,” he continued, “that I might hear more of God’s word. I have not been fortunate enough in all this time to obtain a Bible. I have nothing but the first eight chapters of Romans and a portion of John’s Gospel, the latter part being lacking. More than this I have not.”

Walter thought a moment, and then said,

“Perhaps I can help you. Be so kind as to step a little out of my light; then I can see what I have.”

The aged Baldwin did as Walter requested, and saw that the latter drew from his waistcoat a great quantity of loose leaves and examined the same so far as the darkness permitted him.

“Yes, I can assist you,” said Walter. “Here I have the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first chapters of the Gospel of John. It is, indeed, torn in different places, but that is not my fault. Add this to yours; then you have at least one whole book.

I have also a part of Luke here, and, as I know the second and third chapters almost by heart, I can easily part with them. Will you accept them from me?"

The aged man was so carried away by joy that he could find no words to express his gratitude, but took Walter's hand and kissed it heartily. Walter once more folded his papers and concealed them in the same place from which he had taken them, while Baldwin locked his in the little closet.

"Now tell me, dear Walter," said Baldwin, "what your intentions are. You said something about them awhile ago, but I believe you ought not to reject my counsel to rest here for some time yet. On the other hand, I must say that it were better that you went away from here; and the sooner, the better, for who can tell what to-morrow may bring us? But, at all events, you must stay here this night. I usually sleep in the round chamber in the hunting-tower, but as soon as all is quiet I shall come here and spend the night at your side. Perhaps Dirk will come also; he can keep you company. I shall give him the key of this dwelling; I hope he will come. Grada has promised to send him. Do you approve of that?"

Walter nodded assent and said,

"I long to see Dirk again, the good fellow! He helped me so much, and asked repeatedly with such great concern how I felt."

“Yes,” added Baldwin, “he is a good lad ; there is something in him. I trust you will be able to say something to him ; you understand what I mean. But now I must go,” continued Baldwin ; “it must be about nine o’clock, and soon the bell for the vesper-bread will be heard, at which all who are in the service of my mistress are called into the large kitchen to partake of supper. I therefore must go. Do you wish anything more ?”

“I do so much desire you to kneel down at my bedside and pray with me before you leave. Will you do this ?”

Without uttering a word against this, Baldwin kneeled down and prayed. The eyes of both were closed to all earthly things, and were only directed to One, their only Advocate in heaven or in earth, Jesus Christ.

Had they had eyes for earthly objects, they might have seen amid the shadows of the night an enemy who went about, like the evil one, seeking as a roaring lion whom he might devour. Then perhaps they would have observed how the Noortdorp Fox leaned with his ear against a crack in the door, listening with all his might to what was spoken there in quiet solitude—as it were, alone with God.

The aged man arose, handed Walter some few refreshments which he had brought with him and bade him good-night, adding that about eleven or twelve o’clock he would be with him. After this, Bald-

win left the room, and, leaning upon his stick, took the direction of the castle.

“So!” muttered the Noortdorp Fox as he saw him disappearing in the shadows of the night; “now it is my turn. This is quite a heretic hole. Who would have thought that Baldwin also belonged to the apostates from our holy Church? But this comes of not rooting out the heretics.” He leaned against a knotty oak tree, thinking of what to do in order to entrap both Walter and Baldwin.

While the Fox stood there seemingly unable to decide upon any plan, he saw by the light of the rising moon that some one was approaching. Soon he heard the same person humming a tune, and, not knowing whether it was a friend or an enemy, he concealed himself as quickly as possible behind a tree in order to await unseen the approaching person.

The singer was none other than Dirk Gapertz, Grada’s brother. He was a fine lad, large of stature, with a good pair of eyes in his head. Full of life as he was, he possessed a heart for everything that had any attractiveness for a youthful temperament. The rattling of arms sounded more pleasantly in his ears than the mass of Mr. Jasper Peters, the parish priest of Egmond-upon-the-Sea. Therefore he was not at all sorry that the scene of the war between the Dutch and the Spaniards had shifted to these regions, and he was too young—or,

rather, too little acquainted with the moving causes of this struggle—to be able to judge which of the two parties was in the right. Just now he sided with the Spaniards—not so much because they suppressed the Reformation in the land with such great inhumanity as because they were the victors. As for Dirk's religious principle, this did not amount to a great deal ; he never thought upon the subject. He confessed the Romish faith, since he knew no better than that this ought so to be. He knew all the saints of Rome by name, but the *one* Name by which men can be saved was altogether strange to him—or, rather, he knew only the sound of that name, not its meaning. This was the lad whom we have heard mentioned as the brother of Grada, and who now, passing the hiding-place of the Fox, walked straight toward the dwelling wherein our Walter found himself.

“Who is there?” cried Walter, who raised himself in the bed at the rattling of the lock.

“Keep yourself quiet ; it is I.”

“Dirk?”

“The same, in proper person. But, by St. Nicholas, how dark it is! Where are you? Are you still in bed?”

“Yes, Dirk, for Father Baldwin told me so pressingly to keep quiet that I would not have dared to disobey him in this.”

“Well, Walter, Father Baldwin may be right,

and therefore I will not say anything. But it will be just as well for us to see each other. Grada said that a lamp was hanging somewhere close by the bedstead."

Feeling with his hands along the wall, he searched until he found the wished-for object. He took the lamp from the nail and placed it upon the table near the bedstead. He was just busy taking out the articles which were to serve in lighting the lamp, when suddenly something seemed to occur to him. He ran quickly to the window and placed a sort of shutter before it, whereby it became difficult for outsiders to observe what took place inside, much to the grief of the Fox, who was now for a moment baffled in his treacherous designs. He speedily left the place, raising his clenched fist threateningly against the house.

"I had almost forgotten," said Dirk, softly, "what Father Baldwin charged me to do. Those who are outside have no business to look in here, were they nothing but trees; for I have heard it said more than once that even trees have eyes."

Having completed this thoughtful arrangement, Dirk took from his pocket a small box containing a piece of steel, besides tinder and flint. He struck the steel against the flint until the tinder caught fire, then blew upon the tinder until it glowed brightly. From the box he took a small thin piece of wood; this he held near the tinder, continuing to blow

until the wood caught the flame, so that he could now light the lamp.

"So, Walter," he said, turning a friendly face toward the boy, "now we can see each other. How are you since morning?"

"Very well, Dirk. I am glad you have come, for I must say that it is not pleasant to lie thus in the dark alone."

"You are right, Walter; therefore I came to have a talk with you, and I will stay here till Father Baldwin comes. I have brought you something to drink. Wait a minute," he continued, taking out a small stone bottle; "here is a drop of spiced wine. This will do you good. I haven't a glass, but boys like us can do without. And look what I've got here," he went on, holding up a large paper parcel and throwing the contents upon the table; "this is something extra. I found it by the cook in the kitchen, who had received it from the dessert of the lady of Westerhout. I thought it would taste as nice to me as to him, and he hasn't any teeth to chew with; therefore I took a handful of sugar-plums and cakes. I hope you don't dislike them? There! take a taste."

"No, thank you," said Walter, somewhat shortly.

"Come, now! It's well meant, Walter; I brought it along on purpose for you."

"That may be, dear Dirk, but I would rather not eat anything of it; and if you love me, put it

all up again in the paper and take it back to the cook."

"And what for?"

"Because it doesn't belong to you."

"Now, that would be nice! You must not take things so strictly: that is what Mr. Jasper Peters, the priest, says."

"No, Dirk; you need not take the trouble to persuade me: I will eat nothing of it. The Lord forbids me."

"Yes, the priest doesn't want it, either; but when I have confessed and given my penny, everything that is wrong becomes all right again—except for the twenty Ave Marias which I must mutter over that day."

"And do you not fear that the Lord will punish you for it?"

"I thought of that at first, too, but the priest told me once, 'Let me take care of that.' Well, he may, for my part."

Walter shook his head compassionately; he pitied poor Dirk, who knew so little of the way of life.

Meanwhile, Dirk put the candies quietly back in the paper, and then, taking the stone bottle in his hand, said,

"Well, then, this you will not despise. The cook has nothing to say about this."

"This is very nice, Dirk," said Walter, taking a

long draught. "Ha! that's refreshing. I had a burning thirst."

"Now, perhaps you can't guess," said Dirk, after setting the bottle on the table and placing himself, half leaning, half sitting, upon the edge of the bedstead—"perhaps you can't guess what I would gladly learn from you?"

"What is it?" said Walter, pleasantly, secretly rejoicing that his counsel had had such good effect.

"I would like to know so very much," continued Dirk, "how I shall manage it to see Don Frederick de Toledo, who besieged and took Haarlem."

Walter frowned at the mention of this name and had a word ready on his lips which would not have sounded very agreeable in Dirk Gapertz's ears; but he bethought himself in time, and contented himself with asking simply,

"Why would you like to see that man so much?"

"How can you ask that? The whole world has his name in the mouth; everywhere you hear of his great courage and his fame. Could I but see that man, I would be very happy."

"And what good would it do you?"

"'Good'! Well, as I should see him in all his glory, with his beautiful armor, his flashing sword and his plumed hat, I would go to him and say, 'Don Frederick de Toledo, may I lend you a hand? I would so much like to help you fight!'"

"Help him fight?" asked Walter, astonished.

"Help him fight? Against whom, then, would you use arms?"

"Now, that is a great question!" cried Dirk, clapping his hands. "Mr. Jasper Peters, the priest, would say,

'I never saw greater foolishness:

He asks for the village that lies before him.'

Fight? Why, against the— Yes— Against whom is it? How does the priest call those people who make faces at Holy Mary?"

Walter, in spite of all the seriousness which the question about Don Frederick had occasioned, could but laugh heartily at Dirk's novel way of expressing himself.

"How could I know that, Dirk?" he replied. "I have never yet spoken to the priest, neither do I believe there are any people who make faces at Mary. Did not she die long ago?"

"Yes; I did not mean it so. I mean something else. But that takes me too far away from my subject. Oh, how are these people called?"

"I am sorry I can't tell you," replied Walter. "But it does not matter how these people are called, does it, against whom you wish to fight? The question is, Have they done you so much evil that you would therefore war against them?"

"That's not it exactly," answered Dirk, "but I want to fight for the sake of being near Don Fred-

erick de Toledo, and to become as great a man as he is."

Walter listened calmly to the lively Dirk. He comprehended that he must speak with prudence, and, laying his hand upon Dirk's arm, he said,

"Listen, Dirk ; I must tell you something. But you must promise me not to get angry."

"Angry ! angry !" answered the latter. "Say on. Between such good friends as we are, getting angry mustn't be thought of."

Walter took Dirk's hand in his, pressed it kindly and said,

"If I understand you aright, you would count yourself very happy if you could become a great man—a hero, for instance?"

"Just so ; that is the right word. A hero with a plumed hat."

"Well, Don Frederick has taken Haarlem, as you know—"

"Yes," interrupted Dirk, "and made many a one a head smaller."

"Exactly ; but what for?"

"Because they were rebels, of course."

"So you think, but it is not true. Those people are rebels no further than that they want to read the Bible and seek all their salvation in the Lord Jesus."

Dirk immediately crossed himself at hearing this name, and Walter continued:

"I want to ask you a question. That lamp there on the table—who lighted it?"

"Why, I did," answered Dirk.

"And what do you say of that lamp?"

"That it is burning right nicely."

"Well, but suppose some people should tell you that lamp doesn't burn; it gives no light; it is dark in the room. What would you say to that?"

"Why, I should think that there was something the matter with their upper story," replied Dirk, lightly.

Walter smiled, and continued:

"That's the way it is with the people you call rebels. Your Church teaches that the priest can forgive your sins; your Church also teaches that the priest can get you into heaven, and that heaven can be *earned*. Then she forbids you to read the word of God, the Bible, from which alone we can learn to know what the Lord God has spoken to us. She commands you to kneel down—or, at least, to give great honor—to images of men, although the Lord has forbidden all this in the Bible. The Bible is a book which makes our sins known to us and points us to the one Saviour who has died for our sins. This is the light which the so-called *heretics* find in the Bible and your Church says it is not true. What do you think of that?"

"I?" asked Dirk, who had become very sedate—

"I? I should think that God knows better than

all the priests put together, Mr. Jasper Peters himself into the bargain."

"Well said!" rejoined Walter, taking courage; for he was afraid that he had made Dirk angry by his plain manner of speaking. "Well said! Yes, the Lord *does* know better, and he has told us so in his word."

"But how do you know this so certainly?"

"Because I have often read the Bible, and know much of it by heart."

"Then you are also such a— Oh, that name has slipped me again! Such a—"

"Heretic, you mean, is it not? But rest assured I never yet made faces at Mary, for the simple reason that I never saw her."

Dirk laughed heartily.

"Now," continued Walter, "in that word of God there is something quite different from what your priest teaches. It says that no one can give you heaven—no priest, no pope, no Virgin Mary—even if all the holy apostles came to your assistance; none except ONE."

"And that *One* is—?" asked Dirk, softly, holding his eyes upon Walter.

"Jesus, for his name is 'Saviour.' He has died upon the cross for your sins. Only one thing he asks of you."

"And that is—?"

"To believe that he is your Saviour."

"Doesn't Don Frederick believe this, then?" asked Dirk.

"I doubt that very much; for else how could he persecute those poor people who believe this and cannot call the darkness light?"

Dirk sat silently upon the edge of the bedstead and reflected.

"One question, dear Dirk: Do you still wish to see Don Frederick or become like him?"

Dirk did not think long, but, springing up from the bedstead, he said,

"Let Don Frederick de Toledo go! Do you know I am going to propose something else? I am going to stay with you; I am going everywhere you go. Do you want to take me along?"

"You know I am a persecuted *heretic*."

"Well, then I want to become a heretic too, if only to remain near you. And, whether you like it or not, I shall stay with you even though my whole family should oppose me."

"Think of what you are doing. Pray first to the Lord; in all that we undertake we should ask his guidance. He is our only light. But what is that? What do I hear? What an uproar and clashing of arms!"

They did, in fact, both hear the sound of arms. Walter sprang out of bed, hastily dressed himself, and was about to rush to the door with Dirk, when it was violently thrown open and Baldwin entered.

The old man was completely out of breath; all his strength seemed exhausted. He sank powerless against the wall, and could scarce utter the words,

“Flee, Walter! flee! The Noortdorp Fox—”

“This way!” said a voice close by the house which sent a thrill of terror through Walter’s heart. “This way, men! Here is the heretic. See that you catch him alive.”

Dirk seized Walter’s hand, and said in a whisper,

“Hold fast to me and follow me, for I know the way here.”

To turn the lamp over so as to extinguish the light was the work of but a moment; then they both sprang upon the bedstead. Dirk pressed upon a spring and quickly pushed aside a sliding-door, and after he had noiselessly put the door into its place they found their way to the attic.

Meanwhile, the Fox entered the room, uttering a volley of oaths. He stumbled over the body of old Baldwin and fell, so that his long nose came into no gentle contact with the floor.

“Light! light!” he yelled, in a husky voice, as he rose to his feet. “Light, quick, or they will escape us!”

One of the men approached with a burning torch; but when they looked around the room, no one was to be found but the unconscious Baldwin.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DAWNING OF A NEW LIGHT.

WHILE the Noortdorp Fox and the men with him were searching the room, Walter and Dirk climbed up into the attic along a narrow beam. They knew, however, that this place would soon be searched, and therefore they were glad to escape through the window by means of a stout rope, which they tied to one of the crossbeams. It was well for Walter that Dirk was with him, for the latter knew the way there as well by night as by day. They were glad to get safely down to the ground, and secretly commended the Fox's stupidity in neglecting to surround the house by his spies. They soon put a distance between the house and themselves sufficient to prevent pursuit; and when they had reached the outskirts of the woods and were at the foot of the sandhills, they determined to rest a while.

Meanwhile, the Fox had searched every possible hiding-place in vain. There was no lack of oaths at his fruitless endeavors; and when, at length, he came upon the attic and discovered the open window

through which the boys had made their escape, his fury knew no bounds. He stamped so violently upon the floor that the house shook. But it availed him nothing, for neither his rage nor his stamping caused the lads to appear.

“That heretic has escaped!” he burst forth, clenching his fist. “But as truly as the prince of Orange is a rebel I shall not rest till I get this Walter in my power, and then woe to him! I shall take good care of him.” Returning to the room, the Fox gave vent to his wrath upon the aged Baldwin, who lay still unconscious; his followers beat the poor man with the butt-ends of their muskets, and then left the house to pursue the fugitive, for the Fox did not know that Walter had so unexpectedly got an adherent, and that there were two heretics now.

More than an hour had passed since Walter and Dirk had fled from the hospitable dwelling of the aged Baldwin, and they were now seated in a sand-pit which Nature had formed between two sandhills. They sat close together, for the cold night-air had made them chilly, and Dirk had his arm thrown tightly around his friend’s neck, as if he feared that he would slip away from him.

“What are you thinking of at this moment, dear Walter?” asked Dirk, bending his head so as to look under his broad-brimmed hat.

“Of God, Dirk. I thank him that he has again

so graciously delivered me from the hands of my persecutor."

"I wish I also could pray and give thanks, Walter, but I know not what to say. Mr. Jasper Peters, the priest, has indeed taught me to pray a little, but that was in Latin, and so many strange words came in that I could not pronounce them, much less remember them. Shall I try to say that Latin prayer?"

"I would not just now, Dirk," replied Walter. "I believe that we should address the Lord in the language of the land in which we were born, and which we know so well that we need not guess at the meaning of the words. We are Holland lads, and it isn't necessary for us to call upon God in Latin."

"You are right, Walter; but if I don't know anything to pray for, my Dutch helps me as little as Latin does. How shall I go to work? how must I begin? what shall I say? Come, Walter!" he continued, tenderly pressing his hand; "help me along, for I would so gladly learn to pray!"

Walter responded to his expressions of affection and confidence by a warm pressure of the hand, and said,

"Praying, dear Dirk, is simply asking God for something of which we feel the need. We thank the Lord when we have a lively sense of the benefits which he bestows upon us. Oh, dear Dirk, it

is such a good thing to pray often ! It is not necessary to look for beautiful words or to pray long. The Scripture says, 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' Now, you wish to know how you must pray and for what you should thank the Lord ; but if you just think what the Lord has done for us within the last few hours, I will not need to put the words into your mouth. But I would gladly help you ; let us pray together."

In the stillness of the night, seen by no human eye, but beneath the eye of the unseen God, the two boys took off their hats and reverently folded their hands while Walter prayed.

"Amen !" said Dirk at the close. He had paid deep attention. His eyes were full of tears, for the tone of the prayer—yes, every word—had so touched him that he could not control his feelings, but was forced to give free scope to his tears. And no wonder ; it was all new to him. Never had he heard anything like this.

A few moments passed, during which both boys were occupied with various thoughts. Walter was especially thinking of poor Baldwin.

Dirk first broke the silence :

"You told me last evening, dear Walter, that you had read a portion of the Bible so often that you knew much of it by heart. Would you be so kind as to repeat something to me from that Bible,

that I might learn it too? We have nothing else to do. No one knows we are here, and, besides, it is still night. Will you?"

Walter nodded assent, and reflected.

"Listen, dear Dirk," he said a few minutes later; "I will repeat to you the psalm which my mother loved most to read. Do not take the trouble to try to remember the words at present. I cannot now see whether I have that psalm with me or not; but if I have, I'll give it to you in the morning. Listen, then."

With childlike simplicity, with reverence and feeling, Walter repeated the one hundred and third psalm, beginning, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." When he had finished, he turned with joyful countenance toward Dirk and asked him,

"Is not that a beautiful psalm of praise? Are not those precious words? Do you not think that the man who can sing such a psalm in truth and sincerity must be happy?"

Dirk could reply to these questions only in the affirmative.

"But now tell me, Dirk," continued Walter, "which part of the psalm has especially touched you."

"That," replied Dirk, "where it speaks of God not doing with us after our iniquities. Repeat that again."

Walter readily complied, saying,

“‘He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.’ Is that what you mean? Yes, indeed, that is precious. If we sincerely repent, he forgives us our sins.”

“And do not we need to do something for it, Walter?” asked Dirk, who thought of all the penances and punishments constantly laid upon him by Mr. Jasper Peters.

“Nothing but that *one* thing I told you of last evening. We must go with our sins to Jesus, for he has suffered for our sins upon the cross. But the priest must have told you this?”

“I remember something of it, but I never heard it before as you put it to me.”

“Therefore pray constantly to the Lord to open your eyes that you may see his salvation and may accept the grace which he offers you. Will you do it?”

“I will try, Walter. But I hope to remain with you to be continually reminded of it, for I am a wild boy.”

“Are you really in earnest?” asked Walter. “Do you wish to remain with me and accompany me in my flight? This cannot be your meaning. You must go back to your family.”

“‘Family’!” said Dirk; “I have about as much family as lies here on my hand. Oh yes, true

enough, I have a sister, but I see little of her; I sometimes do not see her for a week at a time. I am an orphan; my parents have long been dead. Nothing, therefore, binds me to any one place. Moreover, I am heartily sick of the life at Westerhout, for to sit for ever with the cook in the kitchen and turn the spit isn't very pleasant. I had long thought of saying farewell to that life, but now that you are come my plan is as firm as the Haarlem steeple."

"Well, as you like. But I fear that danger will part us; perhaps some enemy is watching us even now."

"Oh, I am not afraid of *one* man. I have a good large knife, and besides that a dagger, which I found in the woods yesterday. Have you any weapon? It might come of use. Here is the dagger; I shall keep my pocket-knife: I can manage that better."

With these words Dirk handed the dagger to Walter, but scarcely had the latter seen this object when a beam of joy came upon his countenance at seeing his lost weapon returned in this unexpected manner. He thanked Dirk right heartily, but at the same time expressed the wish that he might never have occasion to use the weapon. This feeling Dirk could not altogether share. Don Frederick de Toledo's plumed hat still gleamed before his mental vision, and the thirst for martial fame was

too deeply seated for Walter's conversations about the salvation in Christ Jesus to eradicate.

But now, chilly from the coolness of the night-air and weary with long sitting, the lads bethought themselves of leaving the sandpit.

"I think it would be well," said Walter, "if we should get up and go on our way till day breaks, for I feel quite cold."

"That is excellent, Walter. Come! I'll help a little, for your wounds must hurt you yet."

"Oh, not at all," said Walter, quickly springing to his feet and climbing the sandhill with Dirk; "your sister's salve has done me good. But which direction shall we go? I do not know much about the way here."

"I do not know much more of it, Walter; but, fortunately, the day will soon break. Do you see how low the moon is? Let us climb to the top of the hill; then we shall see the approaching dawn."

The two lads diligently climbed the sandhill; and when they had reached the summit, they turned their eyes toward the east, where a faint streak of light met their gaze.

"It seems to me," said Dirk after they had gone some distance, "we had better keep the seashore and not go to Wyk. Formerly I loved to go there, for Mr. Jasper Peters, who likes me very much, used to be there frequently; but now I don't dare to go there, because you are with me. Mr. Priest would

look very strange indeed if I told him who you are."

"But which way shall we go when we reach the strand?"

"That you must know. It is all the same to me where you go; I stay by you even if you go to the other side of the world."

Walter smiled, for it pleased him to receive this renewed proof of attachment and confidence from the mouth of a lad who yet differed so widely from himself. Dirk was a boy reared in ignorance and superstition, who had no other notions of religion but those communicated to him by his priest; and that these ideas were none of the best or most fruitful our readers have already observed. Fortunately, he possessed a clear head, a cheerful disposition, and was capable of receiving good impressions; therefore Walter was very confident that Dirk would yet come to better thoughts, to thoughts of peace, and he resolved as often as opportunity offered to make known to him the only salvation.

"What are you going to do, Dirk?" asked Walter, seeing Dirk suddenly running forward and clambering up a steep sandhill with great rapidity. "Where are you going?"

"That I'll honestly tell you, Walter," answered Dirk, clambering on without looking back. "My stomach begins to feel empty, and I just wanted to see where I was—whether I could not see a house

somewhere at which we could get something to eat or to drink. Come on and help me."

Walter clambered up after him, and after the lapse of a few minutes they reached the desired elevation, whence they enjoyed a glorious prospect. To the right, in the direction of Haarlem, a reddish-golden glow heralded the coming sun. Before them lay the little village of Beverwyk, and beyond the little wood which spread itself like a green velvet border at their feet rose the Velzer dunes, whose sandy surfaces were colored by the sparkling light. Beyond them moaned the sea, and everywhere life began to awaken in the landscape. The whole was lovely to behold, the messengers of the day thus successively appearing; and when, presently, the sun appeared on the horizon, clothing each spear of grass with a border of gold and converting every dewdrop into a pearl, Walter could no longer contain himself, but, falling upon his knees, he extended both arms and cried with a loud voice,

"Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being."

Dirk had listened to these beautiful verses in silence ; they seemed to have made a deep impression upon him, for he had reverently taken off his hat and thought at this moment about the Maker of all. He felt that he yet stood at a great distance from him, and there came a still, small voice which whispered to him, "Give him your heart. It is wicked, but he is gracious and merciful, and will renew it for Jesus' sake." He hesitated ; he knew not how he must give his heart to God. But when he heard the last words of the yet kneeling Walter—"I will sing praise to my God *while I have my being*"—he could no longer resist the voice, but kneeled behind Walter. He had no words, but the big tears which trickled down his cheeks testified that the Lord had not in vain spoken to him through his word and by his works.

Walter arose and perceived behind him the kneeling Dirk, who looked at him as if he would say, "Leave me a moment alone with this God who hath created these heavens." Walter involuntarily complied, and, closing his eyes, he sent up a prayerful sigh to the Lord of lords.

Dirk arose, and a blush came upon his face ; but it was not the glow which the fresh seabreeze had caused : it was rather the breath of the Spirit of God, which had now first blown upon him. With a cordiality such as Dirk had never yet experienced,

Walter took his hand and pressed it as strongly and affectionately as love alone can do when it makes a covenant for ever. The two then silently descended the sandhill, and ere they were aware of it they were upon the narrow sand-road leading to old Zuidwyk.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARITY CONQUERS.

ABOUT an hour later our two friends were again seated close together. Dirk had thrown his right arm about Walter and looked eagerly at some papers which his friend had taken from his waistcoat. It seemed that Walter was reading aloud, for his finger followed the letters of each word, to Dirk's great assistance, since he could read but very poorly. Suddenly they heard in the distance some rude voices, and with the quickness of hunted deer they both sprang up to see what danger threatened them here. They listened with breath suspended, and no sooner did they distinguish the voices than, with the cry of "It is the Fox!" they ran back into the sandhills.

But it was too late. The Fox had already detected his prey, for scarcely had the boys imprudently climbed a hill to see the enemy from afar before they saw right behind them two soldiers pointing their firearms at them. Dirk grasped his broad pocket-knife, but Walter crossed his arms and looked proudly upon his assailants, who

now came upon him from all sides. He heard a voice behind him; that voice caused his blood to course with more vehemence and his lips to curl with an expression of abhorrence and repugnance. He turned himself, and there stood before him the long form of the Noortdorp Fox, whose shaggy hair, moistened by the dew, hung over his forehead. A mingling of rage and rejoicing was visible upon the features of the persecutor, and, laying both hands upon Walter's shoulders, he so pressed upon the lad with his gaunt fingers that the latter could not keep his feet, but sank to the ground. The boy, however, was too proud to utter the cry which pain would have forced from him; on the contrary, he looked at the man with a reproachful glance and said simply,

"The Lord will judge one day."

"Be silent, heretic!" roared the Fox, raising his right hand and giving Walter a blow in the face.

This cowardly act inflamed the anger of Dirk. Firmly grasping the opened knife, he sprang upon the Fox, and would certainly have dealt him a serious wound if one of the soldiers had not sprung forward and caught the lad's arm.

The Fox contented himself with merely pulling Dirk's ear and saying,

"Why, little boy, how brave you are! What can a dog do against a lion?"

"Against a fox you mean, don't you?" said Dirk,

bitterly. "A lion is not so base. You vent your rage upon boys; that is not lion-hearted. But what will not a fox do?"

Instead, however, of being offended at these words, the man broke into a loud laugh. He could not imagine how a boy dared insult him, and therefore, loosing his hold upon Walter a moment, he said, laying his hand upon Dirk's head,

"Be quiet, my little man, and learn this from me: A fox always picks out the best chickens. But I have nothing to do with you; you shall only get a good thrashing, and then I'll let you go."

Dirk shook his head in disgust and answered,

"Although you may not have anything to do with me, I have something to do with you. You must let my friend go; and if you will not do that, then you may keep me too, for I shall never leave him."

"But that boy is a heretic," said the Fox, pointing at Walter, "who despises our holy Church; he is a rebel rising up against our count, and wants nothing less than our ruin."

"If you call him a heretic," said Dirk, passionately, "and if all heretics are like him, then I declare myself to be one too."

The eyes of the Fox shot flame at hearing these words, and had it been possible he would gladly have destroyed Dirk by a look. He lifted his hand threateningly, but the boy mocked at the threat.

At this moment there was heard near by the barking of a dog. A beam of hope entered Walter's heart. He listened sharply. The barking became louder. The Fox was just on the point of punishing Dirk for his rashness, when a cry from Walter caused him to desist.

"Pol, Pol ! here !" cried Walter, exultingly, seeing his uncle Ruikhaver's poodle running at full speed through the sand.

The dog stopped suddenly, as if he recognized the voice of an old friend ; and when Walter called again, Pol seemed to perceive his master's nephew, for with a loud bark the dog sped up the sandhill where friend and foe awaited him.

Walter increased his calls the nearer the dog came.

"Will you be silent, young rebel ?" said the Fox, rudely pushing the lad aside.—"Men," he continued, turning to his five companions—"men, shoot the dog down. He is also a rebel ; at least, he belongs to a heretic. It is Ruikhaver's dog."

The Spaniards had already pointed their weapons at the dog and were about to fire, when the sound of the dreaded rebel's name sent such a tremor through their frames that they missed their aim. Pol was not shot, but stood still for a moment ; perhaps the bullets had so closely whistled by him that their sound had stunned him. He soon sprang forward, however. The Spaniards again loaded

their muskets, but before they had finished this they perceived behind them, in a turn of the sandhills, ten or twelve Holland soldiers marching upon them, their helmets and arms glistening brightly in the beams of the morning sun.

Before the Fox and his friends had time to recover from the consternation which this sight had caused, they heard the powerful voice of Ruikhaver calling to his men,

“Forward! there are our enemies. Fear not; we battle for a good cause. Long live the prince!”

And with the cry “Long live the prince!” the Dutch soldiers rushed up the hill.

But no sooner did the five Spaniards perceive this man than with all the swiftness which fear could lend they ran from the spot and left the Fox alone with his prey. He hesitated and thought what he had better do. Should he make use of his weapon and defend himself to the last? But this would not benefit him, as the odds were too great against him. Should he take to flight? But who would warrant him that the enemies’ bullets would not reach him? He concluded, however, to do the latter; for he knew that if he could get time to hide behind the nearest hill he would then be—at least, for the moment—out of danger. All this he deliberated with the quickness of thought, and, no longer hesitating, he threw down the fire-arm, as this might impede him in his flight, and

was about to leave the spot with one bound, when two unexpected circumstances prevented him. On one hand he saw the shaggy Pol run upon him angrily, and on the other Dirk, with a quickness and dexterity characteristic of him, threw himself upon him and seized a leg, so that the man fell at his full length into the sand. Quickly he rose from the ground, but now Pol flew at the traitor, and he would doubtless have bitten him severely if Walter's commanding voice had not interfered. The dog released the villain and sprang toward the boy, who kindly welcomed him at this critical moment.

Ruikhaver and his men had meanwhile arrived at the spot; and when the Noortdorp Fox beheld the dreaded man who was acquainted with the treachery committed against Walter's grandfather, he trembled like an aspen-leaf, knowing well that his fate would not be an enviable one.

"So, villain!" said Ruikhaver, stepping up to the Fox; "at last, then, I have succeeded in getting you into my power? For many days past I had intended to look you up, but other occupations prevented me. Tell me, spy, what was your plan just now?"

The Fox was about to invent a lie, but knew that this could not save him, as the boys would immediately expose him. He assumed a most innocent expression of face to awaken his assailant's pity.

But Ruikhaver was not the man to be so deceived; he looked sternly at him, again calling out to him,

“Tell me quickly, you rascal, how you came here and what intentions you had with these lads. I was this night in your village of Noortdorp in order to make your acquaintance, but you were not there; so I thought you were out on some piece of treachery. Say on, but lie not. It makes no matter to me, but your last hour has come, and I say this that you may not increase the number of your sins. Speak!”

But the Fox could not muster courage. Fear closed his mouth.

“Hallo, Bertels!” cried Ruikhaver, beckoning one of his men; “give that fellow a push in the ribs. He will not speak, but he must, as truly as my goods and my blood are devoted to our dear Holland.”

The soldier approached, and was about to bring the butt-end of his musket into no soft contact with the Fox, when Walter, who as soon as his uncle came had sprung forward to meet him, threw himself between the Fox and the soldier, saying,

“Uncle, I pray you, do it not!”

“Not do this? Why not?” asked the latter, frowning severely. “That villain has deserved a thousand such blows.—Go on, Bertels,” continued Ruikhaver, motioning the soldier.

“But perhaps the man wishes to comply with

your request and will speak," said Walter to Ruikhaver, holding the soldier's firearm with both hands.

"But he does not do it; you see he keeps his mouth closed.—Speak, villain! what was your plan with these boys?"

Bertels still held the musket in a threatening manner, and the Fox, seeing that he could not do else, said stammeringly,

"I was commanded to conduct this lad"—pointing to Walter—"to the castle at Cleef, the headquarters of Don Frederick."

"And who gave you this order?"

"I—I— Don— I—" stammered the Fox, who could not so quickly invent another lie.

"I will tell you, liar!" said Ruikhaver. "It was not Don Frederick, who very likely does not even know that this boy is in existence, but your base, traitorous, wicked, disloyal heart. You are no better than a Judas. Your benefactors, whose bread you ate, you have delivered into the executioner's hands; people who never did you any harm you have betrayed for vile gain or for the priests' favor. Therefore, traitor, a creature like you taints by his breath this Holland atmosphere; you are not worthy being called a human being; and the sooner you get the noose about your neck the better for us, who are ashamed to live with such a rascal on the earth.—Men, bind him and hang him in the woods

yonder. I give him five minutes to prepare himself to meet his Judge above. Do your duty, men!"

Bertels rubbed his hands with satisfaction, while he moistened his moustache with his under lip.

"So, captain!" he said to Ruikhaver; "that's a good word spoken. Methinks we had better bind the fellow here and let him make his testament in the woods."

"Good!" answered Ruikhaver. "Deal with him as traitors and spies are dealt with. I leave him to you and will go a few paces away from here, for the sight of the wretched villain I can endure no longer. Only be careful to let him have a few minutes' time to commend his soul to God."

Ruikhaver descended the hill, followed by Walter and Dirk, while Pol ran sportively forward. Dirk had thrown the spy's firearm upon his shoulder. When the three had reached the foot of the sandhill, they sat down near a blackberry-bush. Dirk occupied himself with the musket and examined it all over, while Walter seated himself by his uncle.

"Why are you so quiet, Walter?" asked Ruikhaver, who noticed that his nephew had not spoken a word. "You look at me every little while; have you anything to say to me? Out with it, then; you know I cannot bear dallying. What is there on your mind? Do you want anything of me that you dare not speak of?"

"That is just it, uncle," answered Walter, who gained courage at these words. "Yes, uncle, I have something to tell you—or, rather, to ask you."

"And what is it?"

"Whether you read the Bible much?"

Ruikhaver opened his eyes wide at hearing this question, which he had expected least of all at this moment. He could, therefore, give no straightforward answer to this, so said,

"What makes you ask this question, Walter?"

"I will tell you that presently, uncle; but first be so kind as to answer my question."

"Whether I read the Bible much?"

"Exactly."

"I must acknowledge that I have neglected it very greatly these last days. You know, dear Walter, that I liked it very much and have often spent a blessed hour in reading it with your father, but now I scarcely get time for it."

"I am very sorry, dear uncle."

"And why are you so very sorry?"

"Because otherwise you would have thought a while ago about a certain saying of the Lord Jesus."

"And what is that saying?"

"'But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.'"

"That is very good, Walter. But who says that

I do not forgive that villain? I forgive him with all my heart everything he has done to me, but justice must have its course; such deeds as he commits must be punished. I can, therefore, indeed forgive him his misdeeds, but will at the same time take care that he shall not again commit such wickedness. It seems to me the Lord himself in heaven himself must take vengeance upon such a man."

"There! now you have spoken my thoughts, dear uncle," said Walter, heartily pressing Ruikhaver's arm. "These last words of yours indicate that you are on the point of acting like a Christian. You say that the Lord himself must take vengeance upon such a man; this the Lord will do when it is the Lord's time. I believe, uncle, that you should earnestly admonish this man, that you should warn him of the judgment of God, that you should speak words of peace to him; but I do not believe, according to God's word, that you may put him to death."

Ruikhaver looked at the boy for a moment or two:

"But, Walter, I recollect having often read in the same word of God that David, for instance, called down all the punishments of God upon his enemies. If, therefore, he had forgiven them their trespasses, he needed not to have called down God's punishments upon them."

"That is true, uncle," said Walter, "but you

confuse matters. David prayed for God's punishment, not upon his personal enemies, but the Lord's enemies; my father often told me this. This man is your personal enemy, he has done me and my relatives much evil, but I do not know that we may certainly say that he is the Lord's enemy. Perhaps he thinks that he is striving for the glory of the Lord when he is hurting us."

Ruikhaver seemed to have been brought to reflection by Walter's words; at least, he remained sunk in deep thought for some time. Then he arose and said to Walter,

"And what would you have me do with the Fox?"

"Admonish him, direct him to God's word, make it known to him, hold up to him the unreasonableness of his conduct, then let him go."

"'Let him go'!" cried Ruikhaver. "Without submitting him to the least punishment?"

"Yes, uncle, for it seems to me that when he sees how Christian-like you treat him he will thereby be brought to other and better thoughts. He will then get a good opinion of the adherents of the Reformation, and you will heap coals of fire upon his head."

"Walter," said Ruikhaver, "you are better than I am; you are right. Come! let us go to him and announce his freedom."

How happy and glad Walter was! In a trans-

port of joy he threw himself upon his uncle's breast, to the great astonishment of Dirk, who as yet understood nothing of all this.

All three returned to the hill where Bertels and the other men were. The Fox was in the midst of them; he trembled and shuddered, for the thought of death was fearful to him. When he observed the gladdened, merciful face of Walter, he knew that something favorable to him had been resolved upon; his countenance brightened, and he kept his eyes immovably fixed upon Ruikhaver.

The captain turned to Bertels and called out to him,

"Bertels, loose that rascal."

"Loose him, captain?" asked the astonished soldier. "Loose him? Such a villain?"

"You understand Dutch, do you not, Bertels? You know well that I do not like being contradicted, therefore loose the man. After that he may go free."

Bertels obeyed, grumbling like a wolf driven from its prey back into its hole. By the aid of the remaining soldiers the Fox was soon freed from his bends.

Meanwhile, Ruikhaver and Walter had stepped a little aside, for the honest Hollander could not endure the man's face, notwithstanding he had been moved to forgiveness by Walter. A few moments later a cry of pain struck his ear. He looked

around and saw the Fox holding his hand to his head.

“What has happened to the rascal, Bertels?” asked Ruikhaver.

The countenance of the man addressed betokened hatred and vindictiveness. He held his sabre in his hand and said,

“I am sorry, Sir Captain, that I could not restrain myself. This wretch has done so much evil that if I should tell you all you would certainly not give him his liberty. I had made a firm resolution to repay him his rascalities, even if it were at the expense of my own life.”

“And what is it that you have done to him?” asked Walter.

“Look in the sand; there lies the Fox’s ear. I cut it off and told him that he who will not hear must feel.”

Ruikhaver turned. He thought it was better not to rebuke Bertels, for the Fox had suffered but a slight punishment in view of all that he deserved; so, in spite of Walter’s compassion, he closed his ears to the pitiful cries which pain forced from the Fox. He approached the villain and, regarding him with a look of indignation, said,

“You have heard that I wish to give you your freedom. Think not I do this of my own accord; for if I had acted upon my own impulse, you would now be hanging on some limb. For your freedom

you may thank this lad whom you have so frequently persecuted."

The Fox still held his hand to his ear, and wished to speak some words of thanks.

"Be silent, villain!" Ruikhaver continued; "I cannot endure your words. Get yourself away out of my sight, and learn this time that those whom you persecute practice the lessons of the gospel better than you, who think you serve God thereby. Away out of my sight! But count on this: should I ever get you into my hands again and hear that you are still the same persecutor of the adherents of the Reformation, be sure that you shall not get off so easily. Depart!"

The soldiers made room to let the Fox pass, and he ran down the sandhill without looking back and still holding his hand to his head.

CHAPTER IX.

DIRK CHOOSES A PROFESSION.

THE reader will be curious to know how Ruikhaver came to appear so unexpectedly, and in such good season for delivering Walter.

A short time after Haarlem had been taken by the Spaniards, the prince of Orange, who could easily surmise that Don Frederick de Toledo would soon besiege Alkmaar, had sent, as we saw in a previous chapter, Ruikhaver and other officers with troops to supply the town as much as possible with soldiery. For different reasons, Ruikhaver was forced to remain some time at Egmond and Heilo, and made use of this opportunity to march now and then through the sandhills with a small band of men to reconnoitre the movements of the enemy.

These circumstances Ruikhaver had already explained to Walter. It may be imagined with how much interest the lad had learned this, and how grateful he was for having been saved from such great danger. Dirk thought less about that, for, in spite of all that Walter had spoken to him, the

plumed hat of Don Frederick still hung too daz-
zlingly before his eyes for him to forget so speedily
his thirst for fame. He marched to and fro with
the Fox's musket on his shoulder, although he could
with difficulty handle the heavy weapon. He took
little part, also, in the conversation between Walter
and his uncle, but kept himself in the neighborhood
of the soldiers and examined their accoutrements.
Meanwhile, Ruikhaver had called his men together
and given them his orders. The whole band took
the road to Castricum along the footpath, Ruikhaver
and Walter bringing up the rear.

"Dear uncle," said Walter, a few moments later,
"have you heard nothing about my father or grand-
father?"

"Of your grandfather, nothing. A few days
ago I learned from some deserters that your grand-
father's house is burned to the ground."

Walter drew a deep sigh; it gave him great pain
to think that the dwelling wherein he had spent
many an hour in joy or sorrow was now destroyed
in such a cruel manner. He repressed the rising
tears, however, and repeated the inquiry about his
father.

"I am sorry I can tell you but little about your
father. I know this, however—that he is staying
somewhere in the vicinity of Leyden."

"Near Leyden?" asked Walter, astonished. "It
is not true, then, that my father is at Delft?"

"I think not; I have been informed that your father is at present in the neighborhood of Boekhorst and Noordwykerhout. He was, indeed, for a while with the prince, after his escape from the castle of Westerhout, but did not stay there long, and he would certainly have been here again long ago if the siege of Haarlem had not prevented him."

"But what is my father doing there?"

"You may readily guess, Walter," replied Ruikhaver. "You know your father better than I, and know, therefore, very well that it is his greatest desire to preach the gospel. He is exposed, however, to great persecutions, for the priests excite the peasantry against him. Neither are the town-authorities disposed to permit the public preaching of the adherents of the Reformation, and especially at present will it be unsafe in those regions, since Don Frederick has free access to Leyden. I shall therefore be greatly surprised if we do not soon hear that Don Frederick has besieged Leyden, even as he is about to lay siege to Alkmaar."

"Can you not tell me precisely where my father is, dear uncle?"

"I really cannot tell you exactly, but I would not be surprised if he were at Boekhorst."

"But how shall I go to look for him there? How far is Noordwyk from here?"

"Oh, it is not far if you go along the strand—or, rather, across the sandhills skirting the sea—

shore, which I would advise you to do to avoid all danger. You can easily get there in about seven hours."

"But would you advise me to go there, uncle? Suppose my father has departed again; with whom would I find shelter? I have now been a fugitive among the sandhills for some days; I have nothing to eat or drink; I have no roof but the open sky. But fie!" he continued; "how ungrateful I am! for I murmur against God, who has been so merciful—"

The lad was interrupted in his remarks by an exclamation from Dirk, who ran up to Walter at full speed.

"What is the matter, Dirk?"

"Yonder come Grada and four men who are carrying some one on a litter. What can that mean? I hope the cook isn't there, for he must know that I took the cakes."

"I do not believe the cook thinks about the cakes: it is only the voice of your conscience."

Ruikhaver had meanwhile gone to the front to see whether they were friends or foes who were approaching. He was soon convinced, however, that there was nothing to fear; for when the two parties met, he noticed that the new-comers were simply some people who carried an old man upon a litter. But who can describe the surprise of Walter and Dirk when in the old man they recognized none other than Baldwin? At Walter's request, Ruik-

haver halted his men, and then, turning to Baldwin, Walter embraced the aged man and kissed him as if he had been his father, while Dirk talked with Grada, who told him in few words what had happened since their flight.

The aged Baldwin could scarcely speak, and with difficulty Walter learned the following from his incoherent words: No one at the castle had heard anything of what had taken place that night in Baldwin's dwelling, as it stood at some distance from the castle; so, when Grada, at the break of day, went to the house to see how Walter was doing, she was surprised to find the door open. She entered, and found the aged Baldwin unable to move; after she had refreshed him with some water she learned from him what had happened during the night. The Spanish soldiers, perhaps from spite at not finding their prey, had vented their rage upon the aged man, and had beaten him with the butt-end of their muskets upon his head, body and limbs. The good old man spoke with difficulty and suffered much pain. Grada had subsequently gone to the castle to get help, which she readily found, as all loved Father Baldwin for his benevolence and faithfulness. Immediately some had offered themselves to bear the seriously-wounded man on a litter to Beverwyk, where the nearest surgeon lived. To Dirk's great relief, the cook had remained behind, as he had to prepare Lady Wester-

hout's breakfast. Baldwin's injuries, however, were of such a nature that it was feared he could not endure them much longer.

"And have you suffered all this, dear Father Baldwin?" said Walter, the tears trickling down his cheeks. "Oh, I have thought so much about you! How are you? Have you much pain?"

The old man could not answer; he closed his eyes.

"Do you not know me?" said Walter, sadly. "Do you not know Walter, the son of—" He was about to speak his father's name, but he bethought himself that he was not alone here.

Baldwin made a slight movement with his head, as if to indicate that he recognized him. A feeble smile played about the mutilated mouth; and when he softly opened his eyes, Walter again saw that kindly, friendly look which had more than once so much delighted him. He made a motion with his left arm, and took great pains to signify to Walter that he wished to tell him something; but his voice was so weak that he could scarcely raise it to an audible sound.

At length Walter seemed to understand his desire, and, placing his ear close to old man's mouth, he asked him,

"Do you wish to tell me something?"

"Yes," answered the old man, in broken tones—"yes. I—feel that—my last hour—has come. I die."

Walter was deeply affected, for during the few hours he had spent with him he had learned to love this aged man so warmly that he could not reconcile himself to the thought of parting with him for ever—at least, in this world.

Baldwin pressed his hand, as if to give him to understand that he wished to say something more; and when Walter had placed his ear to his mouth, Baldwin continued,

“Walter, I die, but know that I live, for I believe in the Lord Jesus, who hath said, ‘He that believeth in me hath everlasting life.’ And now he is nigh and comforts my soul; he hath forgiven me all.” Pain seemed to gain the mastery, for his countenance assumed an expression of suffering.

Ruikhaver, Grada and Dirk now gathered about the sufferer, whose presentiment had not deceived him. The dying man held Walter’s hand, whilst Grada kneeled in the sand and pressed a silver crucifix into Baldwin’s left hand. Poor Grada in her simplicity thought that the silver crucifix would be of great benefit were it but near him.

Walter had also kneeled—partly because the position of the litter required it, partly influenced by reverence inspired by the sight of one dying. He wiped the tears from his cheeks, and, bending over the dying man once more, he heard him say,

“I—believe. Amen!”

These were Father Baldwin’s last words; death

had delivered him from all earthly pains. The angels of heaven had come to carry his soul to better lands, there to be robed in the garments of Christ's righteousness, and thus fitted to take part in that salvation which awaits the believer.

All were affected by this incident and stood with uncovered heads around the body of the man whose last breath had been a song of gladness at which the angels in heaven rejoice.

A few moments later the men who had carried Baldwin again lifted the litter and took the direction of the castle, followed by Ruikhaver and his men, together with Walter, Dirk and Grada. About an hour afterward Ruikhaver halted his men, and, turning to Walter, said,

"This is not my way; I continue westward and follow the road among the sandhills. I must therefore take leave."

"'Take leave'?" asked Walter. "Of me? Do I not go with you, then?"

"No, Walter; I have considered, as we went, what was best for you. You cannot follow me, as I do not know what may befall me. In a few days I expect to see the enemy before Alkmaar, to which I am now going, and which I shall use every endeavor to enter; you cannot, therefore, go with me. Your life would be in great danger there. Moreover, you long to see your father, whose assistance, counsel and instruction you still so much need. Lis-

ten to what I shall propose. I will send two of my soldiers with you as far as Wyk-upon-the-Sea; then you go in a southerly direction, and you will find some fishermen or other persons who can tell you the way when you are at a loss. Ask for Boekhorst; and when you have arrived there, ask for the county-seat of Kleinofhem. There you will find some one who can give you information about your father."

Walter answered not; he simply cast a glance heavenward, as much as to say, "I know who will guide me."

Just then, Dirk, who had in the mean time been talking with Grada, came near; he learned with great surprise that Walter was on the point of leaving this neighborhood. Was it any wonder that he who loved his friend so much said to him in a tone of despair,

"Are you going away, and without me?"

Walter was about to answer, but Ruikhaver interrupted him and said to Dirk,

"I believe it is better for Walter to go alone. He must go back to his father, while you must remain with your sister."

"With Grada?" he cried. "She is the whole day in the castle. And say nothing to me about the cook. I do not want to stand at the spit; I am half cooked now. No; even though Mr. Priest himself came, I would not go back."

"But, Dirk," said Grada, "how can you talk so? Do you not love me, then, that you do not want to remain with me?"

"I love you well enough, but—"

"Well, what do you mean?" asked Ruikhaver.

"With your permission, Sir Captain," said Bertels, who had approached, "I believe I know what that boy has in his head. Little Gys, who is busy there twirling his moustachios, told me just now that this boy would like nothing better than to go with us."

A smile beamed upon Dirk's countenance; nevertheless, he held his glance fixed upon Walter, as if he would say, "Say but one word, and I will think of it no more." Walter understood this, and, putting an arm around Dirk, he whispered to him,

"Would you fight against the same persons against whom Don Frederick de Toledo takes the field?"

"By no means, Walter," answered Dirk. "If ever I use the sword, it will be against those who call a burning lamp darkness; that conversation about the lamp I shall never forget. And, though Mr. Jasper Peters should threaten me with hell and purgatory, I would just say, 'Mr. Priest, with your leave, I am thinking of a lamp.'"

"Dear Dirk," said Walter, tenderly embracing him, "may the word of the Lord ever be the lamp which will light all your paths!"

"I hope so, Walter; I shall do my best to think of it."

Meanwhile, the bearers had again taken up their burden, and now went on. Grada approached her brother; she took him by the arm, whispering to him,

"Come! go with us."

"Grada, I cannot think of it. What could I do yonder? I have quite different plans in my head. I will presently tell you what I want to do—at least, if the captain will let me."

"Well, let us hear, my man," said Ruikhaver, while Bertels and the other soldiers gathered about him.

"First of all, it is my wish to go with Walter as far as I can—at least, as far as the two soldiers go. Then I take leave of him, and after that go with the soldiers to Heilo or Egmond."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Bertels and little Gys.

Ruikhaver was too thorough a soldier to oppose this plan. He looked attentively at Dirk; and when he saw that he was a fine boy of whom something might be made, he tapped him on the shoulder, saying,

"I accept your proposal, but *behave* is the word."

"I know it, captain; I learned that behind the spit. But that's all gone by now. Ah! I can think of it with joy. To become a soldier! Will I soon get a hat with plumes?"

Ruikhaver and his men laughed outright at this childlike question.

Dirk saw nothing to laugh at, and asked,

“This is not impossible, is it?”

“No, Dirk,” answered Ruikhaver; “it simply depends upon your doing your best. Be bold and active. ‘For the Fatherland and the Prince!’ that is our motto.—Is it not so, men?” asked Ruikhaver.

“Long live the prince! Long live the prince!” shouted the soldiers, and waved their muskets over their heads.

“And now, Walter,” said Ruikhaver, turning to his nephew, “the Lord reward your piety and prosper you; I hope you will soon attain your desired end. If you see your father, give him my cordial greetings and tell him I often think of him. Farewell, my boy. God bless you and keep you!”

Walter warmly pressed the offered hand; he, too, commended Uncle Ruikhaver to the Lord’s keeping.

“Now, Grada,” said Dirk, kissing her on the cheek, “we shall soon see each other again. Greet Mr. Jasper Peters, the priest.”

“But if he knows what you intend to do, he may threaten you with great punishment.”

“Hear me, Grada,” answered Dirk: “tell Mr. Jasper Peters, if he asks after me, that I don’t believe any of his teachings; I know much better now.”

Grada shook her head dubiously and was about

to give him a sisterly admonition, when Ruikhaver impatiently stepped between them, saying,

"Come! an end must come to this.—You, Bertels, and you, Gys, go with these lads; I will wait for you at Heilo.—Come on, men! Right about face, forward, march!—Farewell, Walter!"

CHAPTER X.

THE HOUSE IN THE WOODS.

DIRK and the soldiers had disappeared behind the sandhills, and still Walter stood where he had taken leave of them. At first he had followed them with his eyes as long as the dunes permitted him; but when he saw nothing more than the blue sky and the yellow sand, he followed them in thought to the different places in which he had spent the last few days. When he compared those days with this hour, he could not but acknowledge that the Lord had preserved him. True, he felt that he was alone, but, raising his eyes heavenward and observing the friendly sunlight, it seemed to him as if at that moment he was more than ever near unto that almighty One whose right hand had so graciously led him.

“Alone, and yet not alone,” he said, softly. “What a mingling of sadness and joy! To be alone, and nevertheless to know there is One who always sees us! What a sense of safety this thought gives! I can be sure in the midst of

persecutions that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of Him whose all-seeing eye regards me. And not me alone. Oh no; that eye also beholds my dear father. He too is *not alone*."

For some time he occupied himself with these thoughts, but suddenly, as if recollecting something he had long forgotten, he put his hand into his bosom. A smile played about his mouth when he felt what he sought, and, thrusting his hand more deeply into his waistcoat, he drew out some papers rolled together and folded up. They were the leaves torn from his grandfather's Bible. With joy he held this remnant, for these same leaves gave him the visible proof that the Lord was also in this his solitude. He unfolded one paper after another and arranged the leaves as far as possible in their order; next he took a leaf and read aloud the tenth chapter of John. When he read the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses, the tears came into his eyes; for, although he had often heard these words before, they seemed new to him now. Therefore he reread the words, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

"What a comfort it is to me to have the conviction that, however much the wolf may threaten, no harm can befall me, for the good Shepherd leads

the way with his staff! and whosoever follows him is out of danger."

Walter fell once more into a deep reverie, from which he did not awake until he heard the cries of some sea-mews overhead, which reminded him that he was near the seashore and not in the peaceful parental home where he had often listened to his father's conversations about the eternal life. This also reminded him that it was high time for him to arise and continue his journey; it would be seven hours yet before he could reach the place where his father was to be found. Praying the Lord that he would preserve him from all danger and lead him safely to his father's embrace, he concealed his papers in their usual place and took a southerly direction, keeping as much as possible toward the sea.

It was now about one o'clock, and the heat was very great; so that the climbing of the sandhills which form the coast of Holland became quite disagreeable. Nevertheless, Walter kept up his courage, for he knew that he could not spend this night among the sandhills, as hunger and thirst would compel him to seek some dwelling-place; so he clambered up one sandhill and down another, and soon perceived the little village of Zandvoort between the hills. He dared not venture to approach the village from the sea side, neither did he wish to stop in the place; for it might be that

a division of Spanish soldiers lay quartered there or that in some way the place might be unsafe for him. Therefore, in spite of the burning thirst which troubled him, he resolved to go straight across the sandhills and past the village, in the hope of reaching some blackberry-bushes where he might slake his thirst with the berries. How frequently had he done this formerly! and how little had he thought then that at some time, as a fugitive, he would look longingly for such a bush! He went a little eastward into the hills, to remain as much as possible among the highest dunes, and thus be safer. Ere long he reached a road which wound among the sandhills to the village, and, quickly crossing this road, he disappeared again among the hills. For more than half an hour he gave himself no rest, but went from hill to hill, up and down, ever careful not to lose his course, but guiding it by the position of the sun. At last, having reached a little bush, he sat down under the shade of some young birches and with eager eye sought for some blackberries. He found few, for it was not quite the time for the berries, but the great heat of the last few days had ripened some before their time, and he was enabled to refresh himself with the juicy fruit.

Having remained here about half an hour, he felt much strengthened by the rest, and arose with the firm resolve to continue the journey without stopping again. He kept along the dunes border-

ing on the beach, to be sure not to go astray. Far in the distance, on the greenish-blue North Sea, he saw a small vessel here and there. Gladly would he have fulfilled the desire to cool himself in the surf or to let his feet be washed by the playful waves, but he could not afford the time. His longing to be under shelter hurried him constantly onward, though he cast more than one glance in the direction of the beautiful and swelling surface of the sea. It seemed that at present his flight was not to be interfered with. No Noortdorp Fox was seen; no Spanish soldier pursued him: he remained alone with his God, who had heard his prayer.

The evening began to fall and the sun had hidden its face beneath the horizon of the watery plain when Walter caught sight of the fertile district of Langevelt and Noordwykerhout. He hesitated for some time what to do. Should he first wait for night, and then make use of the falling darkness to creep unobserved into some dwelling? Or had he better enter the very first house that he saw in the distance? What should he do there? What should he ask? Were they friends or enemies? Were they persecutors or adherents of the Reformation? All these questions rose within his mind, and he knew not what to do. If, he reasoned with himself—if he waited for night, he would be absolutely unable to find the way. This region was wholly unknown to him. Here and there he per-

ceived between the trees the blue slate roof of some farmhouse or the thatched top of some day-laborer's hovel. After spending some time in deliberating, he resolved at last to go on, leaning upon the Lord for help. He cautiously slid from tree to tree in the forest which he entered after leaving the sand-hills, and soon he observed between the oak trees the farmhouse which he had seen from the summit of the dune.

How still and sombre it was here! No human voice was heard, nor even the deep baying of the watchdog; only the cooing of the forest-pigeons or the song of the finch was heard from time to time. This made no cheering impression upon Walter, who kept his eyes fixed upon the house and had not yet by any means abandoned the plan of entering it in some way. Again he advanced a few steps, forced his way through a small bush of young timber, and ere long stood in front of the house. He saw no one. The house seemed to be empty and uninhabited; and had it not been for several objects which he observed intended for the daily uses of a farm, he would have thought that the people had deserted the place. At length he perceived that he was not alone here, for he heard the whispering voices of two men close by him. He listened sharply to catch some words, but he did not succeed in this; for the voices went on, and soon he heard no more. But an indescribable horror

took hold of him ; his imagination pictured things of which before he had not the remotest suspicion. He fancied himself surrounded by a multitude of people who were laying some evil plot ; perhaps they were conspirators who had chosen this house as the point of secret rendezvous. Such thoughts as these flashed through his mind ; and when, by and by, whispering voices were again heard, fear lent wings to his feet. He rushed from the bush straight toward the dwelling, to see whether he could find a hiding-place there.

Meantime, it had grown altogether dark, and Walter, as he ran, stumbled over some agricultural implements. He fell with his head against an object that was long enough to be visible, but was placed so that it must be felt before one would be led to notice it. The fall and the blow had, indeed, stunned him somewhat, but still he had presence of mind enough to grasp the object immediately. This object was nothing else but a ladder. What could be of more service to him just then than a ladder, if he could but see an opening by which to enter the house ? He rose at once, and, turning his eyes to every point of the whitewashed wall, he observed a sort of attic-window. His resolve was immediately taken ; with the least possible noise he placed the ladder against the window and flew quickly up the rounds. Scarcely had he reached the window when the thought occurred to him

that it might very likely happen that some one would take the ladder away, and then he would be imprisoned in the attic. He seized the ends of the ladder, and, putting forth all his strength, he drew it up through the window with but little noise. This labor had, indeed, cost him many drops of sweat, but he now wiped them off, feeling much safer.

Walter found himself in a garret. It was so dark around him that he could go only by feeling his way. Thus he came presently to an opening through which he surely would have fallen if he had not used the precaution of repeatedly feeling with his foot whether there were space before him to stand on. To examine what this opening was intended for, he stretched himself at full length upon the plank flooring and felt around on all sides. Soon he discovered that this was the opening to the garret, from which the steps had been removed. What should he do? He need not think long. As quietly as possible he dragged the ladder to this opening and dropped it slowly and cautiously. He descended, and reached a large loft, which seemed entirely empty, save some hay which lay scattered about. He made use of this to form a bed, and so to give his weary limbs some rest. Gradually sleep overcame him, and, whether he would or not, soon his eyelids were fast closed.

How long he had slept Walter did not know, but

he was awakened by a sound which appeared to him to be very much like the knocking at a door. He stretched himself upon the floor, and perceived in it cracks here and there through which a faint light was visible. Listening intently, he heard a distinct knocking, and soon after the creaking of a door upon its hinges; so it appeared that a gathering was actually taking place in the house. Two, three, four times this knocking was repeated, and each time some one entered the room, which, as it seemed to Walter, was directly beneath this loft. Some time elapsed, during which Walter heard nothing but some indistinguishable words; but suddenly another sound struck his ear—a sound which he had least of all expected here. Plainly he heard the words of a hymn sung by men.

Walter knew not whether he was awake or dreaming. Was this not a hymn frequently sung by the adherents of the Reformation? And was it not the same hymn that was sung in his father's house when John Arentsoon, the great preacher and evangelist, was with him? His heart leaped for joy at the recollection of those times, and he could scarcely refrain from repeating the hymn just sung.

Meanwhile, the hymn was finished, and he plainly heard the manly voice of one who was obviously delivering a discourse to those present. From time to time he heard certain expressions which confirmed his suspicions that those who were here assembled

belonged to the adherents of the Reformation and were at present holding a secret meeting.

Walter was confident that he was now at the end of his flight, and that persecution could not reach him in the midst of his brethren in the faith. But how should he let them know that he was there? He could easily signify to them that some one was in the loft, but thereby he would only give his friends a needless fear, and at the same time cause great disturbance to their pious gathering. He listened sharply, and perceived that the same speaker still continued his discourse. That voice was not wholly unfamiliar to him, but he was still too far removed to be able to distinguish who it was. Meanwhile, it occurred to him that the loft must have some exit. But where to look for it? He dared not walk, for his steps would certainly be heard. Lying flat on the floor, he slid along, feeling before him with his hands. At last he touched an iron ring which was fastened to the floor. Walter raised himself upon his knees, pulled at the ring, and used every exertion to draw open the trapdoor to which the ring was secured. In this he succeeded without making the least noise, and now he discovered that he was above a bedstead,* for the light in the room shone through little open-

* Old-fashioned bedstead in Holland were constructed within the walls of the apartment and completely shut from view by doors.

ings in the door of the bedstead, which was not far below him; and thus, without much hesitation, Walter ventured to let himself drop, and soon was lying amid the downy pillows and blankets of an old-fashioned Dutch bed. As silently as he could he opened a little door above his head, and succeeded in seeing who occupied the room. Immediately opposite to him stood his father's dearest friend, the whilom basketmaker John Arentsoon, now preacher at Alkmaar. Around a table provided with various articles intended for use in administering the Lord's Supper four or five brethren in the faith were seated in an attitude of prayer. Walter reverently uncovered his head, and listened and prayed with the speaker. Soon Arentsoon pronounced the "Amen," which was repeated by the others.

And now Walter became witness to a simple brotherly communion in remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The boy held his breath for fear of disturbing the worshipers. He did not lose a word; everything he heard and saw furnished him the keenest enjoyment and seemed to him an ample compensation for all he had suffered. True, he did not see his father, but he had no doubt that by and by, when he should come into the midst of those assembled brethren, he would hear from them where his father was.

The bread and wine had been partaken of, and again the little gathering joined in a hymn—a hymn which was familiar to Walter. He listened in silence till they reached the last stanza, and then he sang with them.

It can easily be imagined, dear reader, what an effect this unexpected voice from above had upon John Arentsoon and the other brethren; they all suddenly stopped singing and looked in the direction whence the voice proceeded. But Walter continued singing. The boy, full of joy at having obtained the fulfillment of his wishes, sang with all the exultant zeal which this moment could inspire, and signified in this manner that he must be one of their friends.

John Arentsoon was the first to draw this conclusion, and, in his turn lifting up his voice, they all together sang the last two lines of the stanza.

When the last notes of the hymn had died away, they all arose, and John Arentsoon, turning to Walter, asked him through the opening,

“Who are you, and how came you here?”

“I am the son of Ralph Harmsen, and came here to look for my father.”

Scarcely had Walter uttered these words, when one of those who sat nearest to Arentsoon sprang instantly forward, pushed a bolt aside, opened the door of the bedstead and caught Walter in his arms.

"Are you Walter Harmsen of Heemskerk?" asked John Arentsoon, attentively observing the boy.

"Certainly, Mr. Arentsoon," answered Walter; "do you not remember me? About two years ago I visited you with my father at Sloterdijk; do you not remember it?"

John Arentsoon put his hand to his forehead, as if to recall something, and then said,

"Yes, now I remember. But you were not alone then: you had your grandfather still with you. Is not that so?"

The boy assented, but said in a sad voice,

"Ah, yes! that is so. But my grandfather is no more. The cruel Spaniards, after the taking of Haarlem, tore him inhumanly from his home, and they have surely taken him to Haarlem and martyred him."

The tears choked Walter's voice; but when he observed the preacher's face, and instead of a look of compassion noticed a pleasant smile, his heart began to beat quickly, and it seemed to him as if he were about to hear news which would greatly delight him.

John Arentsoon embraced him tenderly and asked him,

"Walter, do you believe that the Lord God can wonderfully deliver his own, in spite of Spanish soldiery and the Inquisition?"

“Certainly ; with all my heart do I believe it,” replied Walter, who breathed more freely already.

“Well, then, my dear Walter,” said John Arentsoon, “know that your grandfather is not far from here.”

“My grandfather ! my dear grandfather !” stammered Walter, in the joy of his heart weeping aloud.

“He is with your father,” continued John Arentsoon.

Walter could contain himself no longer ; he seized Arentsoon’s arm, crying,

“Where are they ? where are they ?”

“Hush !” said John Arentsoon. “Be quiet ; for this is not the proper moment to look for your father and grandfather.”

Walter hung his head and stammered,

“I will be patient, but let not my patience be tried too long. Can you tell me in what way my grandfather escaped ?”

John Arentsoon took the boy’s hand in his own and told him about the following :

“You are doubtless aware that through the treachery of a certain inhabitant of Noortdorp, called Wybrandsen, some Spanish soldiers plundered your grandfather’s house and carried him away captive. They bound him with thick ropes to the tail of one of their horses and goaded him on with their muskets and spears. Thus they pro-

ceeded until they reached the farm of a certain John Soeter, who secretly favors the Reformation, and therefore remains still in that neighborhood, expecting in this way to be able to rescue a few of the persecuted and oppressed. Arrived at the farm, the soldiers granted the old man some rest—not so much on his account as for the sake of the foot-soldiers, who had suffered much from the heat among the sandhills. Your grandfather was released and thrown like an animal upon some bundles of straw which lay upon the ground in a hay-barn. The old man was wholly exhausted, and groaned with pain. The horsemen thought they could go on and leave the further conveyance of your grandfather to two soldiers. Scarcely were the horsemen gone when the soldiers, confident that in his condition the prisoner could think of no flight, laid themselves down next to him to get some rest. But from resting it came to sleeping, and soon they were snoring so loudly that John Soeter heard the sound. The farmer had two servants who by no means sympathized with the Spaniards, and who were very indignant at the maltreatment the white-haired old man had received at their hands. While, therefore, the soldiers were thus soundly sleeping, the laborers said to John Soeter, ‘Would it not be well if we should bind the straw which lies in the barn upon the hay-wagon and carry some hay to D——, near Boekhorst?’—‘For my part,’ said John Soeter, ‘I’ll have nothing

to do with the straw ; you may do with it what you like.' This was all the men wanted to know. A team was hitched to the wagon and the straw thrown upon it."

"But the soldiers, then, and my grandfather?" asked Walter.

"Did I not tell you," rejoined Arentsoon, "that John Soeter did not wish to have anything to do with the straw? The men bound the straw upon the wagon in such a manner that it could not easily fall off. They also doubtless looked at the straw with an experienced eye, for one bundle they placed carefully in the front part of the wagon, while they threw the two other bundles down in the rear. And so they came to this neighborhood, and in such a way that nothing was suspected at Haarlem."

"And my grandfather?" asked Walter, who could scarcely restrain his impatience.

"Your grandfather arrived in safety at the house of the brother of the man who owns this dwelling. This man has nursed him with the most loving care, so that yesterday he could leave his house, and is now at Kleinofhem, where a relative of Sir Batenburg is living."

"I am rejoiced that my dear grandfather was thus rescued. How good is the Lord!"

"Well may you say that, Walter," assented John Arentsoon. "The children of God especially experience this, for they have received eyes with which

to behold his wonderful benefits.—‘This very night we have again been witnesses thereof, my dear friends and brethren,’ continued John Arentsoon, turning to those who had partaken of the Lord’s Supper with him. “We were permitted to receive anew, by the eating and drinking of the bread and wine, the assurance that our sins are forgiven. We also received fresh proofs of the Lord’s favor, since he brought to our arms in so unexpected a way the son of a dear brother. Truly, we have reason to bless the Lord. Come ! let us unite in prayer.”

John Arentsoon kneeled, while all those who were in the apartment, Walter not excepted, followed his example. He prayed with a humility such as could be expected alone from an experienced Christian ; and when he spoke the “Amen,” all testified that the Lord had been very near to them.

For some moments they remained plunged in deep thought, but Walter, knowing that he was so near his loved ones, had little rest. He once more gave expression to his intense desire to make his way to Kleinofhem, and Arentsoon, embracing him tenderly, said,

“I shall try and have you brought there ; I myself cannot go with you. I was at Kleinofhem this afternoon, where I took leave of your father, who remained with your grandfather. I had promised to meet here with some faithful brethren, and I am

now about to take leave of them also ; for my dear people at Alkmaar are longing for me to come back. I will entrust you to the care of two brethren who live near Kleinofhem, and will conduct you thither."

Immediately some declared themselves willing to comply with the preacher's wish ; and when John Arentsoon named one of them, it seemed to Walter as if he had heard that name before, and, asking whether that man was not married to Geert Geertsen's sister, he received from her husband's own mouth the glad news that the woman whom he had saved a night or two ago was, together with her children, also at Kleinofhem. This information was very welcome to Walter, and but increased his desire to go.

At this moment there was heard the cracking of a whip outside the house, and, as this was the sign that the wagon which was to convey John Arentsoon hence stood in readiness, they all gathered once more about the beloved and faithful preacher of God's word and pressed his hand cordially, while many a prayer fell from their lips. John Arentsoon spread his hands over them in benediction and commended all to the gracious keeping of the Almighty, after which he left the house, ascended the wagon and soon disappeared in the Noordwyk woods.

John Arentsoon did not see his friends again ;

he died during the siege of Alkmaar, in October, 1573.

Half an hour after John Arentsoon's departure from the house, the room where the meeting had been held was cleared, the lamp extinguished, and Walter and his friends were soon on the road to Kleinofhem, where he safely arrived at the expiration of about half an hour.

I shall not attempt to describe the joy and happiness of the reunion when Walter was received by his father and his grandfather. My pen is incapable of doing justice to the feelings which filled the soul of the aged Harmsen, his son and his grandchild. For a long time they were locked in one another's embrace without uttering a word, and not until they had given free course to their tears of joy were they enabled to say to one another, "Truly, the Lord is great in mercy; his love is without end."

Geert Geertsen's sister was also present at this reunion, and it may easily be imagined that sleep was little thought of that night at Kleinofhem. Many an hour was spent in relating what had befallen the grandfather and Walter. The former wept on hearing of Aggie's sad death, but the confidence that she had entered eternity with her eyes fixed on Jesus once more poured sweet wine into the bitter cup which he had so often drunk. Walter's father also had many a special mercy to re-

count. The occurrence at the castle Westerhout, the incident in Baldwin's dwelling, the flight of Walter and Dirk, the wicked deeds of the Noortdorp Fox, the heroism of the brave Ruikhaver, Baldwin's death,—all was told; and when the first beams of the rising sun lighted the windows of Kleinofhem, Walter still sat in the midst of his loved ones blessing God for all he had done for them.

CHAPTER XI.

A BATTLE ON THE SEA.

IT was about the middle of October, 1573—a memorable year in the history of Alkmaar—when on a certain day the streets of the old-fashioned town of Hoorn were crowded by a multitude of people, many having even climbed upon the roofs of the houses the better to observe what was taking place within the walls of their seaport. And it was indeed worth the trouble to exert one's self not to lose anything of what was to be seen, for on this day the admiral of the Spanish fleet, Count Bossu, was led captive into Hoorn with many of his men.

Among the spectators were two old acquaintances : if our eyes had been directed to a window in the street along which the procession moved, Ralph Harmsen and his son Walter would certainly have been observed. Just as a small division of Holland spearmen passed through the street Walter and his father had stepped to the window, and recognized in the commanding officer the brave Captain Ruikhaver, who took such an important part in this

naval battle. The officer observed them, and gave them the warrior's salute. But who can describe Walter's surprise when he observed Dirk Gapertz in the midst of some marines? The whilom kitchen-boy seemed to be in excellent spirits; at least, he stepped proudly past the house, as much as to say, "See what great heroes we are!" And such indeed they were. The battle that had just been fought was one of the most remarkable of the long war with Spain.

The reader remembers our telling about the siege of Haarlem. One disadvantage under which the defenders of that devoted city had labored was that a large lake, called the Haarlem Lake, afforded to the Spaniards the opportunity of cutting off their supplies. Many conflicts had taken place upon its waters between the patriots and the enemy, in small open boats or not much larger sailing-craft, but finally the Spaniards cut the dyke (or earth-bank) that ran between Haarlem and Amsterdam, and which held back the waters of the Gulf of Y. When these waters rushed through the opening of the dyke into the lake, its depth was so greatly increased that the ships-of-war of the Spaniards, commanded by Admiral Count Bossu, could enter it; and now the enemy gained complete control of the lake. After the surrender of the city the Spanish fleet had returned into the Y.

Meanwhile, the siege of Alkmaar was being

pressed, and the patriots, to prevent this fleet in the Y from co-operating with the Spanish land forces, had sought to make the outlet of the Y into the Zuyder Zee impassable by sinking boats and old vessels, and all sorts of rubbish, in the channel; but this proved of no avail. Though much delayed, the fleet under Bossu succeeded in clearing the channel. It sailed forth into the Zuyder Zee on the 6th day of October, two days before the Spaniards were compelled to abandon the siege of Alkmaar. As news did not travel very fast in those days, Count Bossu did not know but that the siege was yet in full force; so he steered for the north to render what aid he could to the Spanish army under Don Frederick.

But the Dutch patriots had not been idle; and if on land they were as yet hardly able to cope with the forces of Spain except from the walls of their cities, on the sea the sturdy Dutch mariners—called “Water-Beggars”—were quite a match for them. The ships of the Water-Beggars had entered the Zuyder Zee from the north, and had been cruising up and down in the vicinity of Hoorn, expecting the enemy’s fleet at any moment. In order to reinforce their numbers, some detachments of the patriot army had been withdrawn from Alkmaar during the early part of its siege, and among these were the soldiers under the command of Captain Ruikhaver. Thus it was that Walter’s uncle hap-

pened to be with the fleet, as also was his friend Dirk Gapertz.

During several days the hostile fleets frequently came in sight of each other. Their numbers were about equal, but many of the Spanish vessels were very much larger than those of the Dutch, and carried heavier guns. The Spanish admiral therefore preferred to keep the Water-Beggars at a distance, and to let them feel the effects of his heavier cannon. The latter were anxious to reduce the distance and to try the chances of a close encounter, even a hand-to-hand combat if possible. Finally, on the 11th of October, the wind was such that the smaller ships had the advantage of the larger in sailing and steering and could approach them as they pleased, while the others could not get themselves out of the way. Thus they could not escape the close battle which the Hollanders sought. The whole fleet of the patriots now bore down upon that of the enemy.

The Dutch admiral, Cornelis Dirkzoon, made straight for the Spanish admiral, whose flagship was tauntingly named the "Inquisition." As Dirkzoon's ship glanced along the Inquisition on one side another Dutch vessel grappled it on the opposite side, while a third and fourth fastened themselves beneath its lofty bow and stern. Most of the Spanish vessels strangely deserted their admiral, and those that stood their ground were driven to flight. They

were hotly pursued by the Water-Beggars and several captured. The battle now continued only between the Spanish admiral's huge ship and the four smaller vessels that were desperately clinging to her on all sides.

And fierce indeed was the battle. It commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon and continued until eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the next day—twenty hours of continuous, sanguinary, hand-to-hand fighting. No attention whatever was paid to seamanship; the five vessels drifted along with the wind and tide. Ere long the large Spanish ship struck upon a sandbank not far from the North Holland shore. Here supplies of men and ammunition could reach the patriot vessels without hindrance, while the Spaniards were rapidly losing both. At one time a bold sailor—John Haring by name—leaped into the rigging of the *Inquisition*, climbed aloft with the agility of a cat, tore down the Spanish flag, and nailed the Holland colors to the mast. But on his descent from this gallant exploit he was shot through the heart, and fell dead upon the enemy's deck. There could, however, be but one issue to this unequal combat. The Spanish admiral at last felt that to continue the fight would be nothing but murderous obstinacy, as victory was utterly out of the question; three-fourths of his men had already been killed. Accordingly, he surrendered at eleven o'clock in

the morning of October 12, four days after the relief of Alkmaar. Count Bossu became a prisoner of war.

Boundless was the joy of the patriots; two signal successes gained within so short a time over a foe that boasted himself invincible raised the spirits of the people and greatly encouraged them in their struggle for liberty.

That same day Ruikhaver called on Walter's father. The brave warrior was greatly rejoiced to see father and son so happily reunited, and, although he had but one hour at his disposal, he communicated various important matters of interest. Among other things, he told Walter that the well-known Noortdorp Fox had the day before been led a prisoner to Hoorn and would to-morrow suffer death for his many crimes. He had been caught in the act of torturing a woman to death; and when he had been examined on this charge by the magistrate, so many cruelties were brought to light that sentence of death was pronounced upon him.

Ralph Harmsen had already heard so much about the Noortdorp Fox that it was not necessary for Walter to urge his father to visit the man. Through Ruikhaver's influence with the keeper of the prison, Ralph Harmsen and his son gained access to the doomed man that same day. They found the unhappy wretch in a terrible condition.

He was chained by the right hand to the stone wall ; his eye expressed the despair of one who is sensible that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For a moment father and son stood thunderstruck at this sight. Walter hid his face on his father's bosom ; compassion for the villain caused the tears to well up in his eyes.

Slowly Ralph Harmsen approached the Noortdorp Fox and said softly,

" Wybrandsen !"

The Fox shook the red hairs from before his eyes, and, casting a despairing look at father and son, he uttered a loud cry.

" Wybrandsen," repeated Ralph Harmsen, " do you remember this lad ?"

The Fox fixed his eyes immovably on the ground, as though he dared not meet the questioner's look.

" Wybrandsen," continued Walter's father, " you have done me and mine much evil, but the Lord God has ordered it all for the best. However, we did not come to judge you ; on the contrary, we have come here to forgive you for all the harm you have done us. Yes, what is more, I have come to pray with you. You know that to-morrow—"

" Ha ! to-morrow !" yelled the wretched man. " To-morrow—"

" You will appear before the Judge of heaven and earth," said Ralph Harmsen ; " to-morrow

you must render an account for all you have done. Wybrandsen," he continued, approaching a step nearer, "are you prepared to meet that Judge?"

Wybrandsen gave no answer, but struck his right hand against his forehead in token that he was in great fear.

"It is, however, not yet too late, poor man!" Walter's father continued, laying his hand upon the prisoner's shoulder; "it is never too late for him who will go to Jesus with a repenting heart. Think of it! The murderer upon the cross found grace, therefore do not despair. Confess your sins to the Lord in sincerity, pour out your heart with all its wickedness before him; seek pardon in Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save them that were lost, and you will find that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live. And while you now hear his loving voice harden not your heart."

Ralph Harmsen ceased a moment, to wait for an answer from the prisoner; but, as he did not receive any, he continued:

"Wybrandsen, I ask you now, in the name of the Lord, are you prepared to appear before God's judgment-throne and give an account for the sins committed in your life?"

"No, no, no, no!" moaned the wretched man,

nervously pressing the chained hand against his breast.

“Prepare yourself, then,” said Walter’s father. “I repeat it again : confess your sins to him ; fall at his feet and beseech his pardon. Will you not do this?”

The Fox answered not, but wiped away a tear which had fallen upon his hand.

“Think on what he offers you,” continued Ralph Harmsen—“an eternal salvation if you repent, or—”

“I can hope for no salvation,” answered the Fox, slowly and in a hollow voice.

“You say this, but the Lord speaks not thus. He calls to you at this very moment and invites you to come penitently unto him.”

“I have done too much evil to be forgiven,” cried the prisoner, folding his hands.

“The Lord Jesus prayed even for his murderers ; therefore do not despair, for you have an Advocate with God who came into the world to deliver your soul from eternal perdition. Go, therefore, Wybrandsen—go to Jesus before it is too late ; for there remains no second sacrifice. Go, then, to him with all your guilt, with all your sins. His blood cleanseth from all sin—from *all* sin.”

The tears flowed down the prisoner’s cheeks.

The following day the sentence of death was executed.

We now leave our hero for an interval of some years; and when again we meet him, we shall find him in quite a different part of the country, and fully committed to his life's chosen work.

CHAPTER XL.

A RAINY DAY.

SIX years have passed since the events related in our previous chapters. It is the early spring of the year 1872. It had rained incessantly for twenty-four hours, not that it seems even yet as if the clouds of heaven would soon be cleared, but much rain was especially desirable at a season when epidemics were unknown in England. About halfway between the cities of London and Amsterdam, in the province of Utrecht, there stood an inn which presented by no means an imposing appearance. Over the door's lintel was a sign upon which was depicted what was in due to be an eagle blowing a trumpet, the purpose of the emblem was supposed to be to attract the attention of the travellers. The keeper of this inn was, accordingly, the name of "the Eagle Inn," and the proprietor's house was at the end of the street, and he was to enjoy their pot of "Amsterdam beer."

CHAPTER XII.

A RAINY DAY.

SIX years have passed since the events related in our previous chapter. It is the early spring of the year 1579. It had rained incessantly for twenty-four hours, nor did it seem even yet as if the sluices of heaven would soon be closed. So much rain was especially disagreeable at a time when umbrellas were unknown in Europe.

About halfway between the cities of Utrecht and Amersfoort, in the province of Utrecht, there stood an inn which presented by no means an imposing appearance. Over the door there hung a sign upon which was depicted what was meant to be an angel blowing a trumpet, the purport of the sound that was supposed to be emitted therefrom being indicated by the one word "VREDE" ("Peace"). The keeper of this inn went, accordingly, by the name of "the Vrede-host," and the respectable burghers of the neighborhood were accustomed to assemble here at stated days and hours to enjoy their pot of "Amersfoorter beer."

But this inn had been lately much patronized by the Anabaptists, who had settled themselves in great numbers in this vicinity. This sect is well known in the history of the Reformation for its wild excesses and the extravagance of its fanaticism. The acquisition by the Church of temporal power and the establishment of an earthly kingdom were among its tenets. Accordingly, at a favorable moment its adherents had seized upon the city of Münster, in Germany, more than fifty years before the date of our tale. While in possession of the city they had made themselves guilty of many outrages upon common sense, religion, and even decency. A fellow by the name of John of Leyden, a low artisan, had caused himself to be proclaimed king. In the year 1535 the bishop of Münster, aided by some of the princes of the German empire, recovered the city after an obstinate siege.

Although the sect was nearly annihilated by the persecutions which followed this defeat, it had not been rooted out completely. After the death of John of Leyden his doctrines were again widely disseminated by one David Joris, who died in 1556. Then arose successively kings or leaders rejoicing in the titles of John the Cobbler, John the Hatbandmaker, and other "Johns" of that ilk. All these obtained a more or less extensive following. At the time of our story the sect was

led by a self-styled king who had collected a numerous band of followers, or subjects, about him, and who had chosen the province of Utrecht as his headquarters. This Anabaptist king is known in history by the name of John William Stevens, or, more commonly, by that of John Williams, by which latter designation we shall farther on introduce him to our readers.

On this rainy day three men were seated in the Vrede inn. Two of them had placed themselves in the middle of the guest-chamber, and were busy emptying a beer-can; the other was sitting near the only window that afforded light to the apartment. It was very clear that the latter was not a companion of the other two men, for not only did he pay no attention to their noisy conversation, but he greatly differed from them in his appearance. The two companions seemed to belong to that class of persons who have no great desire to provide for their daily wants by an honest handicraft or trade, or any work whatever. The man by the window, on the contrary, was evidently a stranger to this inn, having been compelled to enter it only as a shelter from the rain. Although a young man who had not added many years to his twentieth, he yet seemed to have already attained some advancement in the profession of a soldier; he wore the uniform of an ensign in the States' army. His features were prepossessing; in spite of his youth,

they betokened a high degree of acuteness and resolution. His thin lips were firmly set while in repose, and the clear eyes, although now mild in expression, betrayed a latent fire and seemed accustomed to keen observation.

As we said, the young soldier was seated at a small table by the window. The long rapier fastened to a white leather belt, which he had unclasped, was suspended on the high back of his chair. From time to time he gazed listlessly out of the window and whiled away the time by watching the raindrops pattering down upon the heath. When, occasionally, a lull in the storm would leave the atmosphere somewhat clearer, he could detect in the distance the church-steeple of the village of Vlooswyk. Now and then his look turned toward an inner door communicating with a back room, as if he expected some one to issue from that region; and whenever the host, who sat perched upon a beer-cask, noticed that look, he called out to the stranger,

“Have patience, Sir Ensign! Your meal will be ready in a few moments.”

The ensign would then contentedly nod his head, drum a march upon the table with his fingers and gaze once more into vacancy, or, what was not much better, through the window and across the Amersfoort heath, taking no account whatever of the presence of the other two guests, who continued

to carry on their conversation in ever the same boisterous tones.

“Hallo there, mine host!” one of the latter suddenly cried out. “Do you think we want to get mouldy here? Our can has long been empty, and it seems the more it rains the more thirsty we get. Give us a fresh canful, quick!” With this he held up the empty can and handed it to the innkeeper, who hastened, with many bows, to fulfill his guest’s wishes. A moment later the host placed a foaming can before them, and then went into the rear apartment, in order, doubtless, to see to the preparations for the ensign’s meal.

Meantime, the two boon-companions, having each taken a deep draught of the beer, continued their conversation as follows:

“I tell you, Gysbert Barends, that the lord of Vlooswyk gives our master many a good piece of money to earn, and, although it comes from such a papist, what matters it so long as we get our share of it?”

“Yes, and it is a pity, Koen,” said the other, carelessly resting one hand upon the hilt of a short straight sword—“it is a pity that we shall not stay much longer hereabouts.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, it all seems clear enough to me. You know,” continued Barends, taking another draught, “that I have a pretty good pair of eyes in my head,

and I use them too. I have noticed for some time past that our master, John Williams, is getting a little uneasy ; very likely he does not think himself safe in these parts, because the States' troops, as well as the Utrecht magistracy, are having their eye on him. I am afraid they may soon stop all our business ; that would be too bad."

"Yes, that *would* be bad," assented Koen. "But what then?"

"I don't know. But one thing is sure: John Williams won't pitch his camp except where something is to be gotten."

"That, to be sure, is very royal of him. But each according to his deserts."

"Yes," said Barends, laughing ; "that's what that fat priest of the cloister of Our Lady says too whenever he is alone in the wine-cellar."

"He isn't of much account, is he?" asked Koen, seizing the beer-can.

"No, but we can make him useful to us. He differs much from M. Waenders, his reverend colleague ; he is as keen as a fox."

"You may believe he is ! How nicely he can deceive people with his saintly countenance !"

At this point the man addressed as Barends called at the top of his voice to the host to bring them another can of beer.

The latter came out of the back room, carrying some victuals designed for the ensign's use. After

first hurriedly filling the order of the pot-fellows, he spread a clean tablecloth upon the table by the window and set before his guest a round loaf of Utrecht brown bread, butter, eggs and fried bacon. These articles were well calculated to invite the ensign's appetite; and when the host had once more seated himself upon his beer-cask, the former doffed his broad-brimmed hat and reverently asked a silent blessing upon his food. This did not escape the notice of the other two guests, and, putting their heads together, they indulged in jests at the expense of the young man, who, indeed, observed this, but did not intend to notice it or get into an altercation with them.

"Well, now," said Barends, mockingly, and somewhat louder than the affected whispers they had exchanged before, "it seems as if this pious ensign was going to make this place his quarters for the night."

"That is bad enough," remarked the other; "I hope he won't interfere with our arrangements. What time will Walter Harmsen be here?"

Koen had not said this very loudly, but whether the ensign had given particular attention just then, or whether something in what was spoken had struck him, suffice it to say that no sooner had the fellow ceased speaking than the officer laid down his fork and for the first time looked straight at the two men.

Barends touched his questioner with his foot under the table, and said,

“Don’t speak so loud, Cornelis; don’t you see that he’s listening to us?”

“What of that?” said Koen, defiantly, turning to the beer-can. “What care I for that young milksop? If he annoys me, I’ll make him smart for it, as sure as my name is Cornelis Koen. I’m not a bit afraid of his long sword there.”

“Do keep still!” said his companion, who saw that the beer was having its effect. “Don’t you remember that our master has strictly forbidden us to molest any of the States’ troops?”

“That may be, but none shall forbid me to stop any of them annoying me. I’ll—”

“Hush, Koen!” whispered Barends. “Fill the glasses, and let’s drink to the success of our undertaking.”

But Cornelis Koen could not be prevailed upon to subside. He did not, indeed, omit to pay his respects once more to the contents of the beer-can, but, striking with his left hand as hard as he could upon the table, he raised his glass high in the air with the other, and called out, to the no little consternation of mine host,

“I drink to the perdition of all eavesdroppers!”

The ensign did not deign even to look around, and quietly put a piece of fried bacon into his mouth. Koen had certainly expected that his

words would enrage the officer and force him into a quarrel; he now assumed an air of calm contempt, saying to Barends, with an attempt at withering scorn,

“With an army of such men as that, the Spaniards will soon be driven from the land! What say you? Methinks if they were but to get a sight of such bacon-eaters, they would run away at once.”

Barends again touched Koen with his foot and used every endeavor to bring him to reason. At length he said,

“Remember that the other one may come at any moment, and what then? In our undertaking we must use caution, or else he may escape us.”

“Walter Harmsen escape us?” replied Koen, scornfully. “That never!”

And again the ensign looked up from his victuals and threw a quick glance toward the speaker.

CHAPTER XIII.

TROUBLESOME COMPANIONS.

THIS second look of the ensign incensed Cornelis Koen beyond all bounds. In spite of Barends's remonstrances, he rose to his feet, ran to the place where the officer was quietly taking his meal, and said in an insulting manner,

“What right have you to listen so shamelessly to our conversation?”

The ensign laid upon the plate the egg which he was about to eat, and, fixing his intelligent eye upon the fellow, regarded him in silence with a penetrating glance expressing mingled pity and contempt.

“Do you not hear me, my little ensign?” continued the half-intoxicated Koen, who could ill brook this cool behavior, at the same time striking the table violently with his hand.

The ensign, having no desire to degrade himself by entering into a quarrel with the drunken fellow, persisted in ignoring his insults, and, taking the egg from his plate, began to shell it.

"You sha'n't eat that egg!" shouted Koen, growing still more enraged.

"No?" inquired the ensign, innocently.

"No! I tell you no!" retorted Koen.

"Why not?" again inquired the ensign, sprinkling some salt upon the egg.

"Because I can't endure your presence here."

"But I do not interfere with you in any way, do I?"

"'Not interfere'?" cried Koen. "For more than half an hour you sit there and listen to all that is said."

"But I think I have as much right in this public-house as you have; and if you choose to talk in loud tones, must I close my ears? To listen, look and say nothing is usually thought a commendable virtue, and I recollect how the priest of Egmond used to tell me:

'Wilt be discreet and wise?

Thine ears thou needst not close,

But keep thy lips in better guise:

A padlock's weight impose.'"

"What do I care about your priest of Egmond and his padlock? I have nothing to do with them. Your presence annoys me, and therefore pay what you owe here, and then go your way, or" (with an oath) "I will show you your way myself."

"It is written," observed the ensign, looking

earnestly at Koen, “‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.’”

“Keep your pious saws to yourself. I know about these things just as well as you do, although I don’t make such a show of them.”

“So much the worse, then, for you; for it is written again, ‘To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.’”

“It seems,” said the fellow, who became even more angry in proportion as the ensign preserved his temper—“it seems that you are bound to exasperate me with your Bible texts. All that talk, whether papist or Protestant, is of no good, anyhow: I belong to the Church of the true followers of Jesus Christ.”

The ensign’s indignation now first began to kindle; it pained him to hear such a sacred name fall from lips so unworthy. He rose to his feet, and, folding his arms, said,

“You shall not take the holy name of Jesus thus lightly upon your lips. Awhile ago you uttered a profane oath; if you belong to the true Church, you should witness a good confession before men.”

“What confession?” was Koen’s disdainful reply. “I belong to the true people whom the Lord hath chosen unto himself and given the New Jerusalem for a possession. Your confession is no doubt a lesson learned by rote and drilled into you by Nicholas Sopingius, one of those made-to-order

preachers in the church at Utrecht. What is your confession but a gathering-up of all sorts of nonsense?"

"You ask me about my confession," replied the ensign. "I shall never be ashamed to own it. This is perhaps hardly the place to speak of such things, yet I will tell you that I belong to the Reformed Church and am devoted body and soul to the Reformed Confession."*

"Did I not say that, with all your texts, you were a pious little ensign? Come, come! you

* Our readers must not be surprised to hear such words as these, such bold and earnest expressions of faith in Christ and of loyal and fearless devotion to the Church, from the lips of an army-officer in the year 1579. But years before the organization of the Church the name of "*Reformed*" had obtained a special significance. The "Confession" originated as follows: In the year 1562 a certain zealous preacher, Guido de Bres, assisted by Herman Modet and other pioneers of the faith in the Netherlands, composed a little book in the Walloon language, later published in Dutch under the title, *Acknowledgment or Confession of the Faith held commonly and unitedly by the Faithful, who are scattered everywhere throughout the Netherlands, and who desire to live in accordance with the purity of the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*. In the year 1563 this Confession, revised and approved by a convention at Antwerp, was published in both Dutch and German, and two or three years later an abbreviation of it, comprising thirty-seven articles, was published in Holland. These thirty-seven articles still form one of the standards of the "Reformed (Dutch) Church in America." See, for origin of the name and the distinction of *Reformed*, and for the rise of the Reformed Church in Holland, the latter part of the next chapter.—TRANSLATOR.



The Attack in the Inn.

are in a good way to become a catechiser or field-preacher. But now let's see if you have learned to obey. I tell you to leave this place, or I'll read you a text which you won't soon forget." Thus speaking, he drew from beneath his cloak a short but stout sword, and, with the cry, "Help, Barends, help!" he was about to throw himself upon the youthful soldier. Quick as thought the ensign unsheathed his rapier and prepared to receive his adversary.

The host, from his seat upon the beer-cask, had in vain endeavored to prevail upon his guests to keep the peace, and had grown more and more uncomfortable during this exchange of words; now he precipitately left the room.

Barends, as the dispute progressed, had many a time shaken his head disconsolately over the folly of his comrade; but when he perceived that it had actually come to a life-or-death encounter in which Cornelis Koen might very likely be the loser, he sprang to his feet, and, rushing to the latter's assistance sword in hand, he placed himself beside him, in order to attack the ensign with combined forces.

Fortunately, the ensign succeeded, while confronting his assailants, in keeping the wall at his back; so that they could not attack him in the rear. He made a temporary barricade of the heavy chair on which he had been sitting, and, swinging his long rapier, he cried out defiantly,

“Back, I tell you, or I’ll run you both through at one thrust!”

“Hear that young braggart!” retorted Koen. “He talks as if he were sure of his game. But we’ll soon stop that pious Reformed mouth of yours. There! taste that!” He pressed toward the ensign, intending to deal him a fatal blow, but the latter parried the thrust by a skillful movement, and succeeded, at the same time, in inflicting a severe wound upon his assailant’s hand. Infuriated by the pain, he was about to hurl himself upon the soldier, reckless of the sword that was pointed at him.

Barends, meantime, had gone around the table to assail the ensign on his flank. Serious as his danger was becoming, the youth was still anxious to spare the lives of the murderous pot-fellows. Bringing down the flat of his blade with a stunning blow upon Koen’s head, causing the ruffian to reel backward and fall to the floor, he turned in the same instant upon Barends to ward off the attack from his quarter.

“The accursed wretch!” roared Koen, doing his best to get upon his feet again. “If I had you in my power, I’d tear you to pieces.—Strike, Barends, strike! Cut this Reformed fellow right through the heart!”

“Be careful, my man!” said the ensign to Barends, fired by Koen’s words. “Be careful! I have

your life in my hands. If I must, I will sell mine dearly."

"Throw a chair at his head, Barends!" cried Koen, who had risen and was again pressing upon the officer. "I'll teach him how I punish such eavesdroppers as he."

Barends needed no second admonition. He seized a heavy chair, and, while Koen was engaging the youth's attention by compelling him to parry his sword-thrusts, Barends was about to hurl the ponderous wooden missile at his head, when voices were heard in the next room. The door leading to the rear of the house was thrown open, and the host and three men entered the guest-chamber.

"This way! this way!" shouted mine host, pointing out the combatants to the new-comers.

No sooner did the two Anabaptists perceive the entrance of these men than they exchanged significant glances. Barends dropped the uplifted chair, muttering to his companion, "It's he!" They fled with all haste through the front door, forgetting that their last can was not yet empty and leaving it for the later arrivals to settle their reckoning. Two of these ran out of the house after the villains, while the third approached the ensign to inquire if he were hurt.

The ensign regarded the young man with a look of mingled surprise and pleasure, and then exclaimed,

“Walter Harmsen!”

The latter scanned the soldier carefully; it began to dawn upon him that his features were not unfamiliar. He made an effort to recall the past, and at last, reaching out his hand to the ensign in a cordial grasp, exclaimed,

“Am I right? Are you not my friend Dirk Gapertz of Egmond?”

“The same stands, by God’s grace, alive before you, and is rejoiced that he is permitted once more to see him whom he had not expected to meet again except in heaven.”

“Who would have thought that we should meet again?” said Walter Harmsen. “You were often in my mind during these last six years, and I feared greatly that you had lost your life in the service of your country. I am heartily glad to see you, and to perceive that you are an officer.”

“Yes; I received my promotion about two weeks ago. And where is your home at present?”

“In Utrecht, and you must go with me as soon as we can leave this place. But here are my two friends.” Thus speaking, he pointed to the two young men who had gone in pursuit of the ensign’s assailants, and who now re-entered the inn.

“We could not see anything of them, Walter,” one of them said; “the rascals no doubt hid themselves somewhere in the underbrush.”

“Let them go, my good sirs,” remarked the sol-

dier. "Vengeance does not belong to us ; sooner or later they will get the reward of their doings."

"Allow me, dear friends," said Walter Harmsen, "to present to you my former traveling-companion among the sandhills, of whom you have often heard me speak—my worthy friend Dirk Gapertz, ensign in the States' service.—And these," Walter continued, turning to Gapertz, "are my fellow-students Jacob Hermans—or, to call him by the more learned name which he prefers himself, Arminius—and Thomas Brully, who lives with me at our house."

"I feel greatly honored in being permitted to enter the society of such learned gentlemen," remarked the ensign, cordially shaking their hands. "I am afraid, however, that my rude soldier-ways and my small learning will contribute but little toward making the acquaintance mutually enjoyable."

"My friend Walter Harmsen," replied Arminius, graciously, "is my guarantee for the contrary, and I am rejoiced that the rain forced us to seek shelter here, as otherwise we might not have had the opportunity of meeting you."

"Say, rather," remarked the other young man, who was introduced as Thomas Brully, "that it so happened by the orderings of God's providence."

"Oh, you always come forward with your pet-doctrine of predestination, Thomas!" said Armin-

ius, lightly. "No matter how simply and naturally events run together, you call it a foreordaining of God. It looks as if you couldn't live without it."

"Well may you say that, Arminius," replied Brully. "I would not now be in existence if it had not been for the ordering power and plan of God which we call predestination. Do you know what Isaiah says in the twenty-fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter? 'The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying—'"

"Oh, my dear Thomas," interrupted Arminius, "do me the favor to keep still about your Isaiah. I was afraid, when I but mentioned the dogma, that a quotation would soon follow from some chapter or other of the book of Isaiah. I really believe you consider the prophet Isaiah the apostle of this particular tenet?"

"Yes, but not he alone, Arminius. Oh, if the Lord were pleased to open your eyes and to give you light, then you would see that doctrine taught on every page of holy writ."

"If I looked through *your* eyes, perhaps I should," remarked Arminius, somewhat sharply.

Thomas Brully was in doubt whether or not to take offence at this jest, for he felt that it might be interpreted as an allusion to his being cross-eyed; but Walter Harmsen, thinking it time to pacify the disputants, said,

“Do keep your tempers, my dear friends. Why should you allow this profound doctrine to destroy good-feeling between you? My worthy ensign here will else wish that he had not made your acquaintance.”

“Do not fear that, dear Walter,” said the soldier. “An ensign is accustomed to being placed between two fires, and the fire of these gentlemen will not kill me, although it bids fair to explode them. We had better quench that fire, therefore.—Hallo, Sir Host! Bring us some refreshments for these gentlemen.—The rain still continues, and so we can afford to stay a while longer and talk about old times. Do you approve of that, Walter?”

The latter readily consented to this arrangement; Arminius and Brully likewise agreed to the proposal; and soon our four young friends sat talking together as peacefully as if no encounter with the two Anabaptists or any friction of doctrinal opinions had occurred in that room.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PEEP INTO HISTORY.

IT is necessary once more to interrupt the course of our narrative and remind our readers of the condition of the country at this time.

The year 1579 was one marked by important events in the political history of Holland, and, although we do not presume to arrogate to ourselves the exalted office of the historian, we shall endeavor to bring to the notice of our readers a few matters of special interest that will enable them better to understand our story.

We have already mentioned the siege of Haarlem and the successful defence of Alkmaar, in the year 1573. The spring and summer of 1574 were made sadly memorable by the crushing defeat of Louis of Nassau, Prince William's brother, at Mookerheide, and the horrible sufferings of the citizens of Leyden during the prolonged siege by the Spaniards. On October 3, 1574, Utrecht was happily relieved and the Spaniards were forced to retire from before its walls. As they left Leyden, on the coast, so also were they compelled to leave the heart,

of Holland. Nothing memorable in the way of military operations occurred for some time after this event, but the political, or diplomatic, sagacity of William, prince of Orange, was made illustrious by the celebrated compact effected among the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, known as the "Pacification of Ghent," accomplished in the year 1576. By this agreement these provinces bound themselves to resist the encroachments upon their rights of Philip II. of Spain and the cruelties of the popish Inquisition. It was no revolutionary instrument; it manifested no intention of casting off allegiance to Philip as rightful sovereign over the Low Countries; but it firmly protested against his infringement of their time-honored liberties and privileges, which he had sworn to maintain. By a strange fatuity, however, and an unaccountable blindness to their own interests, ten of these provinces, situated in the southern portion of the country, withdrew from the compact, returned to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church and yielded submission to all that the tyranny of Philip chose to dictate to them.

A braver spirit actuated the people of the North; here William of Orange found a worthy response to his efforts to maintain the rights of the Netherland people. Although the Pacification of Ghent had proved a failure, he still clung to the idea that the best way to oppose tyranny was to bind the several provinces together by a closer union; he

labored, therefore, to effect such a union among the hardier provinces of the North. After maturing his plans he commissioned his brother, Count John of Nassau, to consult with the various provincial authorities and carry these plans into effect. Count John's mission was entirely successful. On the 29th of January, 1579, the seven little provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Overys-sel, Groningen and Vriesland entered into a confederation, binding themselves to stand together as one people for ever in defence of their liberties, and to bear in common the expenditures necessitated by such defence. This confederation is known in history as the "*Union of Utrecht*."

A main provision of this union was the free exercise of religion. Holland and Zeeland, however, might act according to their pleasure in this matter—that is, in these provinces the Reformation had gained such prevalence that it was a question whether it were best to allow the Roman Catholics as much liberty in the exercise of their religion as heretofore they had enjoyed. Intolerance in religion was still the order of the day all the world over.*

This event was followed by important results, especially in Utrecht. This province had been an episcopal see for centuries; an entire revolution of

* William of Orange was in no way responsible for this intolerant provision.

affairs now took place. Zealously Roman Catholic as Utrecht had been before, the civil authorities hastened to exhibit as great a zeal in their adherence to the Reformation ; sustained by the general government, called the Estates, or States-General, the magistrates in the various cities assiduously appointed Reformed preachers to their churches.

The city of Amersfoort, however, had very reluctantly consented to the union ; the magistracy was strongly inclined to Roman Catholic interests. Some months before the union not a Bible had been found in the place. This state of things greatly troubled the pious John of Nassau, who had been made director of the union. He did not share his great brother's ideas of religious toleration, and he felt that he must compel Amersfoort to accede to the terms of the union. He proceeded to convert the city to his own views of religion in the same manner that Charlemagne did with the heathen Saxons and Frisians—namely, by means of the sword. He garrisoned the city with a considerable number of troops, introduced the Bible into the churches, invited several Reformed preachers to occupy the pulpits, and thus caused the Reformation to achieve at least a seeming triumph. These proceedings naturally gave great offence to the Roman Catholic clergy, who received bare permission to exercise their religion in the chapels of monasteries and convents. Much strife and

confusion were occasioned. The Roman Catholics, naturally enough, were not satisfied with their curtailed privileges, and the Reformed wanted still greater opportunities for spreading their doctrines. Amid this condition of affairs occurred the events which we shall soon relate.*

But we must stop a moment longer and tell what had been done toward bringing about organization and government within the Church. That name, as is well known, was arrogated exclusively to itself by the Roman Catholic hierarchy. And, indeed, the scattered and persecuted masses who renounced the errors of Romanism and accepted the faith of the Reformers can hardly be considered to have constituted a Church for several years after the Reformation started upon its glorious career. With the Reformers in Holland ecclesiastical organization began in 1568, the year which also saw the beginning of the Eighty Years' war of the Dutch republic against Spain. A synod composed of representatives from various localities was held in that year at Wenzel, a place beyond the jurisdiction of Spain, but near the borders of the Netherland provinces. Three years later another synod was convened, at Embden, again outside of the provinces subject to Spain. But in the memorable year 1574 the Synod of the Re-

* What follows, to the end of this chapter, is additional matter by the translator.

formed Church in Holland met at Dort, within the Fatherland itself. The delegates assembled on June 16, and remained in session till June 28.

It was a dark time in the history of the country. The Spaniards were before the city of Leyden. The siege had then lasted a month or more, and was yet to continue through more than three months of the most horrible suffering, while all the endeavors of the prince of Orange to relieve it were being repeatedly frustrated. Amid these events the synod met. It represented the churches of only the two provinces of Holland and Zeeland, where alone the Reformation had gained the upper hand.

Four years later, in June, 1578, and one year before the time that we have now reached in our tale, a synod embracing a wider representation was again held in the city of Dort. The other might be called a provincial synod; this was the first National Synod.

A distinctive form and a definite ecclesiastical organization were thus gradually secured. Not only had believers become distinguished from the Roman Church, but among themselves the Reformers had begun to differ. Luther had promulgated some doctrines in regard to the sacraments which the Reformers of Switzerland and France could not accept; hence the followers of the earliest champion of the Reformation were called by his name

—"Lutherans"—and their opponents in Germany and other countries assumed the name of "Reformed." Confessions and catechisms had been constructed in accordance with these views, and a great work systematizing the theology of the Reformation had been written by John Calvin. These synods of Holland ratified the views of Calvin and adopted the confessions and catechisms of the Reformed as distinguished from the Lutheran. They also provided for the government of the churches. Boards of elders and deacons were to be constituted, and such boards called by the name *consistory*.* A number of churches within a certain distance of one another were to be collected into a body composed of representative elders and the pastors of each church, and such body was designated a *classis*.† From these local bodies representatives were to meet as *synods* in various provinces, and a *National Synod* was to be held every three years.‡

As we go on with our story the reader will

* Corresponding with the session of the Presbyterian churches in Scotland, Ireland and England.

† Corresponding with the presbytery of the Presbyterian churches in Scotland, Ireland and England.

‡ If the reader has any acquaintance with the "Reformed (Dutch) Church in America," he will observe that these names of *consistory*, *classis* and *synod* still prevail within that denomination, as also within the "Reformed (German) Church in the United States."—TRANSLATOR.

understand that the converts from Romanism in Holland had indeed become a distinct Church. While this necessarily much promoted the advance of the Reformed religion, we shall also perceive that then, as at all times, too strong a zeal for a mere institution, as such, produced much ungenerous intolerance of other views and interference with other methods of work.

CHAPTER XV.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE RENEWED.

WE return now to our four young friends in the inn, and hasten to satisfy the reader's pardonable curiosity by giving some particulars as to their history and present circumstances.

It would be difficult to recognize in this brave and handsome ensign the kitchen-boy of Egmond, or even the proud young sailor who helped to conquer Bossu on the Zuyder Zee, in which capacity he last appeared before us. The same intelligence sparkled in his eye, but a thoughtful and earnest expression now habitually characterized the manly countenance. Scars upon cheek and forehead showed that he had not spared himself in the day of battle. From certain words that dropped from his lips in his encounter with the Anabaptists, we could readily gather that he had completely abandoned the doctrines (though not the homely old saws) of his former parish priest at Egmond. He had, indeed, heartily accepted the Reformed faith, the fruit of the seed planted in the brief but earnest conversations with Walter Harmsen during their flight

among the sandhills. His promotion to ensign was due to his own valor and faithfulness, as well as to the favor of the distinguished officer Ruikhaver, Walter's uncle, who took him under his special protection and had never found occasion to regret his interest in the young man.

Walter Harmsen, too, was much altered. The noble-hearted, pious boy of fourteen years whom we first met upon the wheatfields in the vicinity of Haarlem had developed into a youth of manly proportions. Of a quieter and gentler nature than Dirk Gapertz, love was the ruling principle of his heart and life. Kindness beamed forth from his mild blue eyes and marked all his doings, and he wished nothing more fervently than to labor for the spread of the kingdom of Him who for the love he bore them gave himself over to death to save lost sinners.

The young man at his right with long brown locks resting upon his large, pointed collar was one whose light-gray eyes betokened an uncommon keenness of intellect and ready wit; in short, there was about him an unmistakable air of genius. His eyebrows were sharply penciled against the intense whiteness of his brows, and his cheek-bones were somewhat prominent. This was none other than Jacob Hermans—or, as he is widely known in the history of theological controversy, Arminius. He was at present pursuing his studies at Utrecht.

The youth whom Walter Harmsen had described as his fellow-boarder and introduced by the name of Thomas Brully was of dark complexion, and his raven-black hair and smallness of stature showed in marked contrast by the side of the fair complexions and tall and well-developed persons of his companions.

For some time the four friends remained engaged in a general conversation, frequently flavored by the witty sallies of the light-hearted Arminius; but, observing or surmising that Walter would be glad to have an opportunity for private conversation with his recovered friend of boyhood days, he linked arms with the swarthy Brully and withdrew with him into another room.

As soon as they were alone Dirk said,

“Now tell me something about your personal history, Walter, since last we met. Is your father yet living?”

An expression of sadness passed for a moment over the calm countenance of the young man.

“My father,” he said, “is, alas! no more. It pleased the Lord in his wisdom to take from me the guide of my youthful days and to stop the zealous evangelist in his work. You know that when a boy I was living with my grandfather while my father traveled about the country preaching the word of God. After the taking of Haarlem, having been driven from our home, we did not settle

anywhere permanently for a while, but about fourteen months ago grandfather and I came to live in the city of Utrecht."

"Did your father fall into the hands of the Inquisition?"

"No; while upon one of his preaching-tours he was taken with a malignant fever, to which he succumbed in a few hours. Of course, Dirk, I do not grieve as those who have no hope—I know that his soul is at rest in the presence of his Saviour—but I cannot tell you how painful his loss is to me. I trust to hold him in dearer remembrance by walking in his footsteps."

"Then you do purpose to become a traveling evangelist?"

"Yes, Dirk. Is not the command of Christ unmistakable to go forth into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?"

"That command is plain enough, dear Walter. And for that reason are you living in Utrecht—to prepare yourself to become a preacher of the gospel? How soon will you be ordained?"

"That is not the way in which I propose to do my work, Dirk; I do not expect to go forth under the auspices of the Church. And let me tell you why I have been led to choose and pursue a course other than the one that is ordinarily followed. I look around me and see that our poor country, in spite of the light that the Lord has caused to be scattered

abroad by means of the Reformation, is still plunged for the greater part in deep darkness. The Church of Rome does its utmost to recover the souls estranged from her idolatries; on the other hand, among the Reformed all sorts of sects rise up, bewildering the minds of the people with many absurd, and even outrageous, doctrines. Of these the Anabaptists are not the least conspicuous. But even those who hold most purely the doctrines of the real gospel are sadly at strife among themselves. Those who adhere to the Augsburg Confession and those who accept the Thirty-seven Articles of the Reformed Confession oppose one another with bitterest hostility, instead of unitedly opposing their common enemy. Look, for instance, at the case of Woerden. That city has become the headquarters of the Lutherans in this province; the chief places in the municipal government are in their hands and the pulpits are filled with Lutheran preachers, and there is very great fear that this city will rise against the authorities of the province because the Reformed Church is being favored and advanced. Looking at these things, I thought I had best keep aloof for the present from all parties and not go forth as the minister of any Church, committed to the defence of any secondary points; I determined to preach the gospel in simplicity and singleness of heart. With this intent I travel about these regions, enter into the people's houses and preach the truth as it is

in Jesus. This is the work the Lord seems to point out to me as mine."

"And does your grandfather agree with you and encourage you?"

"No, Dirk, not entirely; he would much rather have me prepare myself for the regular ministry and be appointed to some church by the government. So, to please him—although he knows I cannot consent to carry out his ideas—and also because I know it will be of great help to me, I attend the lectures given by the learned men residing in Utrecht. Among these is the celebrated Theodorus Aëmilius, who was a Romish priest at Oudewater, but left that place and came to live in our city because he could no longer give his adherence to the Roman Catholic tenets; Arminius and Brully are my fellow-students at his lectures. But now tell me: how did you happen to be in this neighborhood?"

"I am stationed with my regiment at Amersfoort, to aid in enforcing the Reformed religion, as you may have heard, and I am upon this journey because I was entrusted with a letter of instructions from the count of Nassau to the magistracy of Utrecht."

"Then you will go with us to Utrecht? I am exceedingly rejoiced. You must make our house your home during your stay there. We live near the bridge."

"I would like nothing better," replied the officer, "but I shall not be permitted to avail myself of your invitation, as my quarters are assigned to me. But I will not fail to visit you as frequently as the duties of my mission will allow me. But where are our friends?"

"I do not know. I am afraid that they have gotten into some dispute again, for they can hardly be ten minutes together before they have a difference about some passage of Scripture. Brully is of an earnest, straightforward temperament, and soon gets angry at the half-jocose manner in which Arminius meets his arguments."

"I should think they would occasion you much trouble in keeping the peace between them?"

"Indeed they do! If I am not mistaken, I hear them coming now."

The door opened, and the two persons in question entered the room; the earnest face of Thomas Brully was more than usually stern, while a smile of mischief and good-nature lit up the features of Arminius. Brully was heard to say,

"It seems only proper that I should remind you of what Isaiah says about you."

"About me?" queried Arminius. "I never found my name mentioned by that prophet."

"And haven't you read what he says about those who take pleasure in nothing but jesting?"

"My friends," said Walter Harmsen, rising to

meet them, "quit you like wise men and cease your disputes; do not embitter yourselves by these sharp contentions. Come! let us hasten to leave this place, for we have a long walk before us. I think, too, that the storm has somewhat abated.

The ensign, who was anxious to reach Utrecht as soon as possible, gladly welcomed this proposal, and the late disputants willingly consented to address themselves once more to the journey. In spite of their frequent differences, they were very fond of each other, and ere the ensign had paid his reckoning with mine host they were fully reconciled once more.

The four young men now left the inn, and proceeded on their way to Utrecht at a vigorous pace. We shall outstrip them, however, and make the acquaintance of some people in that city who are to play an important part in our story.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSULTATIONS.

ON the same spot where may now be found the "Vreeburg" there stood until the year 1577, or two years before the beginning of our tale, a large castle erected in the year 1534 by the emperor Charles V., and named by him "Vredenburg" (or "Castle of Peace"). In the year 1577 the citizens of Utrecht attacked the Spanish soldiers who had lodged themselves in the castle, compelled them to abandon it and reduced it to a heap of ruins. In the neighborhood of the whilom castle stood the monastery of Our Lady, and into this building we wish to introduce our readers.

It was late in the afternoon. The faint beams of a fast-setting spring sun shone through the high window of the vestry and fell upon the face of an aged man who sat close by the window, seemingly absorbed in the reading of divers books and ancient parchments. His eye had an expression of mildness, although the deep furrows upon his forehead gave evidence, if not of much sorrow, at least of

many cares. He was clothed in the habit of a Carmelite monk and had the appearance of a very venerable Father. He diligently turned the leaves of which the ancient rolls were composed, and after placing them upon the broad window-sill he muttered to himself,

“Often as I read these old manuscripts, I cannot discover a trace of any command or inference that more honor is to be accorded to the Holy Virgin Mary than to the Saviour. These manuscripts are a copy of the earliest collection of the Scripture-books. I know very well that M. Waenders, priest of St. Servatius, and the inmates of this house look with much disfavor upon my continual rummaging among parchments, but, since the archbishop himself has made me superintendent of the library, I shall let no one interfere with my researches, especially as I daily discover new treasures to gratify my thirst for godly knowledge. The more I investigate, the more I am confirmed in the opinion that my friend Theodorus Aëmilius is correct in saying that the Blessed Mary was indeed the mother of the Lord, but that there is no authority whatever for rendering worship to her. For this reason all that I observe here in this convent and in the other religious houses of a similar character begins to look to me like folly, and I cannot endure it. But what can an old man such as I do? I have indeed spoken against it, but only angry

looks on every hand have rewarded my pains, and efforts have been made to remove me. During the archbishop's life, however, they dare not molest me. Nevertheless, I much desire that I may escape these restraints that harass me, and may have more freedom."

The monk ceased speaking, but continued to commune with himself in silence for some little time longer. He then took up the parchments, rolled them together, arose and paced the room back and forth, continuing his soliloquy as follows:

"It seems strange, but whenever my thoughts turn to my friend Aëmilius I am led to think at the same time of a certain person whom I once met at his house; his name, I believe, is Harmsen. He is fervently attached to the new faith, yet I am constrained to admire the venerable man greatly, and my views coincide much more readily with his ideas and his conduct than with those of the indolent priests, who teach the people things which are not true for the sake of making gain of them. True, I do not as yet quite agree with all that Harmsen contends for, but I believe it will do me good frequently to seek his society. Aëmilius is indeed a good man, but not quite so straightforward and disingenuous; for, while he sometimes talks as if he still held firmly with our Church, Harmsen is outspokenly of the opinion that our Roman Church has strayed far from the truth. If all the

Reformed were like the aged Harmsen, I should desire nothing so much as to be one of them."

The old man again relapsed into silent reflection, during which he leaned with his head against a wardrobe; he seemed to be seeking wisdom and direction how to act. Then, resuming his walk, he continued:

"That young Walter is the grandson of the old man. How amiable a young man he is! He seems to be possessed of many novel, and I must say noble, ideas. How frankly, yet with what affectionate interest, and, withal, modesty, did he converse with me when I met him the other day outside the city! From what I could gather from his words, I judge that he differs somewhat in opinion from his grandfather, as well as from the preachers Sopingius and Helmichius—that is, he takes a different view of the necessity of ecclesiastical relations. He prefers not to be ordained, but rather to do humbly and untrammelled the work of an evangelist. But it seems that the stand he takes has made him enemies. The orthodox Reformed do not like him, and all the other sects do what they can to obstruct his work. And our Roman Catholic Church denounces him as a heretic and feels especially bitter toward him because he is more successful in winning converts than the others. I have noticed that the lord of Vlooswyk has a grudge against him, for he comes here frequently and con-

sults with M. Waenders about plans to injure him. I feel greatly for him. May the Lord protect him! Meanwhile, I shall be on my guard and do what I can to shield him—or, at least, to warn him when any danger threatens him. But what is that?" As he spoke the chant of a choir not far distant from the vestry was just becoming audible. "Ah! I know," he said: "the priests and monks of St. Servatius are at vespers. After this some will gather in the vestry; it is time, therefore, that I retire to my cell, as I do not wish to be troubled with their constant reproaches. But I shall first spend an hour at my devotions in the adjoining apartment."

Having made this decision, the old man placed the rolls of parchment in a pocket of his gown and withdrew to the next room, which was separated from the vestry only by a thin partition.

At that instant the chapel resounded with the loud chant of the monks, and distinctly were heard the words of an idolatrous Latin hymn to the Virgin then frequently sung in the Romish churches, beginning: "Veni, Virgo Virginum," and reading in part as follows:

"Come, Virgin of virgins!
Come, Light of lights!
Come, Vein of veins!
Come, Salvation of men!
Come, Brightness of the hosts
Of the celestial army!

Come, Branch of Jesse!

Come, first of roses—

Rose without sting of worms!"

Next there arose a loud murmuring or mumbling, as if several men were praying in concert, after which a man's forceful voice sang the *Oremus* hymn, in the course of which a petition was addressed to the Lord that "for the merits and prayers of the holy Nicholas he would deliver them from the fires of hell."

Half an hour later there entered the vestry two men who could easily be recognized as belonging to the priestly order, as they had not yet divested themselves of the surplices in which they had conducted the vesper services. They were followed by a third person, whose apparel betrayed the nobleman.

"Come in, Lord John van Vlooswyk," said one of the priests. "I trust you did not have to wait long for us?"

The nobleman, whom we have heard addressed as Lord John van Vlooswyk, was richly attired; his features were far from expressing the dignity of his social station, and perhaps for that reason he deemed it the more necessary to announce it by his dress. Over a close-fitting garment, or vest, of black velvet, fastened about the waist with a girdle of twisted gold thread, was thrown a fine broadcloth mantle, falling in loose folds about the hips. Light-brown

leather breeches of a costly quality were secured with dark-blue velvet ribbons at the knees, while flesh-colored stockings encased the legs. The shoes were of the not very elegant pattern in vogue in the sixteenth century. A snow-white stiff collar with wide puffs surrounded his neck, while a long rapier suspended by a heavy silken cord secured at the girdle completed the insignia of nobility.

As the nobleman entered the apartment he pressed with his left hand upon his sword-hilt, so that its point was lifted up and prevented from dangling against his legs in walking. He greeted the clergymen with politeness, and said,

“Be not at all uneasy on my account, reverend sirs. I attended the vesper services; and when I saw you entering the vestry-room, I took the liberty to follow you. If I am inconveniencing you, however, I shall at once take my leave.”

“Not at all, noble sir,” replied the older of the two priests, a man of rather a spare appearance. “On the contrary, we are much rejoiced, as we desire to obtain information concerning certain matters.”

“Yes, yes! certain matters,” added the other priest, seating himself upon a bench against the wall.

“I can only say, reverend sirs,” replied Lord John, “that I hope Heaven will be gracious to us and favor our plans.”

“St. Servatius grant it!” said the one priest, devoutly.

“Yes, yes! St. Servatius grant it!” echoed the other.

“Matters are moving satisfactorily thus far. You know how that young heretic constantly visits the vicinity of Vlooswyk, and even penetrates my own house; you know how, like a cunning huntsman, he sets his snares to entrap my easily-deceived Jacoba. I fear, too, that she is more than half gained over to his devilish teachings. But I am permitting him to go on with his course, intending to catch him in his own trap.”

“That would be a fortunate catch, My Lord,” remarked the first priest.

“Yes, yes! a fortunate catch,” added his echo, complacently drumming on his corpulent stomach.

“As you know, I ordered those two rascals, Gysbert Barends and Cornelis Koen, to waylay young Harmsen and during the night to bring him to this place through the rear-entrance of the convent-garden; I think for a while he could be safely guarded here. I have, however, some apprehension of one difficulty that may arise to interfere with this plan.”

“And what is that?” inquired the lean ecclesiastic.

“There is an inn on the road by which Harmsen is expected to come, and I doubt much whether Koen and Barends will have the firmness to pass

that by without quenching their extraordinary thirst. Once in that inn, nothing can be done with them."

"I shall threaten the innkeeper with a heavy penance if he permits the fellows to enter his place," observed the priest.

"Yes, yes!" sounded his echo; "a heavy penance."

"You forget, reverend sirs," continued the nobleman, "that this innkeeper is a heretic also. We are surrounded by that vermin on every side; and if Heaven itself help us not, what will become of us? Of what avail would your penance be with such as he? We must so conduct the affair that your names will not be connected with it; at least, no one outside these walls must know what is happening within them. I have another plan to communicate."

The nobleman cast a cautious look around the room; the sharp-featured priest interpreted the look and replied to its import:

"Certainly, certainly, noble sir; you can speak with safety. We are here alone, and will remain silent as the grave."

"Yes, yes! silent as the grave," muttered the other.

At this moment a soft rustling noise was heard on the side of the room where the fat priest was seated; and if any one would have looked through

the partition, he would have perceived the aged monk pressing his ear close to the wall, straining every nerve to hear what was being said in the vestry.

"What is that?" asked the nobleman, alarmed. "Is there any one in the next room?"

"Be not alarmed, Lord van Vlooswyk," said the priest; "we are the only persons in this part of the building. Perhaps it was a falling piece of plastering or mortar."

"One cannot be too careful," said the nobleman, reassured, while the lean priest and he took their places upon the bench beside the fat brother. "I had thought that if those two fellows should not succeed in capturing the young heretic, perhaps we might gain the same end, and more besides, by instigating a riot in the city."

"But how is that to be effected? Our power decreases daily."

"Yes, yes! decreases daily," muttered the echo, who was being fast overpowered by slumber and could hardly keep his eyes open.

"Listen," continued His Lordship. "You know that John of Nassau has forcibly introduced the public exercise of the heretical religion at Amersfoort, and you are of course aware that not only at Amersfoort, but also in this city, many are greatly offended at this villainous conduct. I had a call yesterday from Dr. William van der Eyke, the

most eloquent and influential of our priests, and he told me in very vehement language of his purpose at the very first opportunity to call the attention of the faithful to this arbitrary action; I was, of course, greatly delighted with this resolution of his. But this is not enough: the people must be aroused, and all the priests and preachers of our holy Church must combine in denouncing the tyranny of the Reformed. I have formed a plan in connection with such a movement on the part of the ecclesiastics. I will go to the camp of the Anabaptists and arrange with John Williams to furnish me, in consideration of a large sum of money, with a number of men whom I may make use of without its being known that I have anything to do with them. As soon as the people shall have been stirred up to a suitable pitch of excitement by the assurance that many privileges will be restored to them if they unite and overturn the present state of things, I will make a beginning of the revolutionary movement by means of these Anabaptists; and should I succeed in shifting the scene of the riot to the vicinity of the Smede bridge, then it would not be difficult so to manage it that a certain house shall be attacked and certain persons be killed. What think you of this plan?"

"I think it excellent," replied the lean priest, "and you need not fear but that we will do our share."

“Yes, yes!” repeated the fat brother, who had begun to nod occasionally; “do our share.”

“It would be a glorious thing to achieve,” continued Lord John, who, actuated by a desire for personal revenge, sought to stir up the zeal of the priests and scrupled not at the means wherewith to do so—“a glorious thing; for thus the heretics would be destroyed at a single blow and their evil designs nipped in the bud. And what do you suppose these designs are? I have learned that the Reformed intend to plunder the St. Nicholas and other churches, to desecrate the altars, remove the images of the saints and convert these buildings to their own use.”

“St. Servatius preserve us!” exclaimed the priest. “Who ever could have conceived such an outrage? Surely the magistracy will not permit this? I know that heresy is daily on the increase and has won over perhaps a majority of the citizens, but no one will venture to violate the privileges guaranteed to us by the union. Are you quite sure that you have been correctly informed, noble sir?”

“Yes, yes!” echoed the other, now wide awake; “correctly informed?”

“I am assured of it,” persisted the nobleman, who had not counted on this incredulity, and must now plunge more deeply into falsehood to make it seem more like truth. “I am sure of it, since I know that Helmichius is a party to these designs. I am told

that even the prince of Orange, otherwise so cautious in matters of this kind, intends ere long to come to this city to consult about it with the directors of the union, and I have evidence that John of Nassau has a hand in it; for there is now in town one of his officers, who is to take command of the troops of the garrison and employ their aid forcibly to close the Romish churches and drive out the priests. I am on my guard against this John of Nassau; he never was a friend of mine, and I have some suspicion that he is not wholly ignorant of the fate of the man whom we have in our keeping here."

"What fearful things are these!" exclaimed the priest, clenching his fist. "This must not happen!"

"And this *will* happen if two things are not attended to by you and me."

"And what are they?"

"First, to rouse the people and call them to arms, which must be done by you ecclesiastics; and secondly, to overthrow and make way with the ringleaders: I will take care of that."

"I fully agree with you, and we will second your endeavors."

"Meantime, it would give me great pleasure if you would visit my house. Poor Jacoba is carried almost entirely away by this heretic's teaching; I would send her off to a convent were it not that

I have sworn an oath to superintend her education in my own home. She is little more than a child, and her heart is very susceptible to right direction. Will you come and speak with her, and seek to reclaim her if possible?"

"Assuredly, noble sir. Nothing will be more agreeable than to seek to shatter these chains of error by which she is held. You may count on our fidelity."

"I wish those two Anabaptist scoundrels were here," remarked the lord of Vlooswyk; "they ought to be here by this time. But do I not hear some one approaching?"

CHAPTER XVII.

A FORMIDABLE DWARF.

THE quick ear of the nobleman had not deceived him : the footsteps of some one rapidly approaching were distinctly audible. Soon the door opened and a person of very singular appearance entered the room. He was of a height no greater than that of a good-sized boy of twelve years, but his features plainly indicated a mature age. His face was smooth-shaven, but along the cheeks and under the chin there were unmistakable traces of a beard suppressed with difficulty. The eyes showed great vivacity and acuteness ; the thin lips, the upturned nose and the broad chin signified an inclination to waggery as well as a capacity for pride. Although his arms might be considered somewhat long, they were not badly out of proportion to the other members, and, while the man was undoubtedly a dwarf, there was nothing deformed or repulsive about his person.

In spite of the seriousness of the affairs under discussion between the occupants of the apartment,

the sudden entrance of this strange manikin caused an involuntary smile.

"What do you wish, Joriskén?" inquired the priest, mockingly.

"With your permission, reverend sir," replied the little man, drawing himself up to his full height, "my name is *Joris*, and the diminutive was not applied to me when I was baptized in the St. James church on St. Martin's day of the year 1547."

This outburst of offended pride so greatly excited the risibles of the ecclesiastics and the nobleman that they laughed outright.

"I repeat once more," said the priest, forcing himself to speak with sobriety, "what do you wish? If you do not answer me at once, I shall order you to leave the room."

"I shall tell you what I wish: I am looking for my master, Father Boniface. As for your orders, I shall decline receiving any from you, since His Eminence the Archbishop has appointed me solely to service in the library."

"Oh, indeed!" observed the priest, contemptuously; "you belong to the library. Therefore, as Father Boniface is not in this room, my little man, you may depart."

"That I will do whenever it pleases me," replied the dwarf, in a towering rage.

"You surely dare not continue to address such

language to an ordained priest?" said the zealous nobleman, angered by the little man's pride and insolence.

"An ordained priest," sharply retorted Joris, as little daunted by the nobleman as by the other, "should know how to render respect to whom respect is due."

"Are you, then, so honorable a personage?" inquired Lord John.

"I think that I ought at least to be treated with the respect due me."

Lord John could no longer control his temper. Ascertaining by a look that the action had the approval of the priests, he seized Joris by the arms, above the elbows, lifted him from his feet, and, in spite of the most violent efforts on the dwarf's part to release himself, set him in the passageway and quietly bolted the door after him.

"You shall pay for this, Lord van Vlooswyk," shrieked the assistant of Father Boniface, striking his fist against the door. "You shall soon find out what it means to insult Joris Ruikmans!" He then withdrew, but as he went the sound of one growling under his breath was still for a few moments audible.

"He is an insolent little fellow, Your Reverence," remarked the noble.

"He is indeed; his boldness and pride know no bounds. Were it not that we pity his weakness, and

that he is under Father Boniface's special protection, I assure you we would long ago have rid ourselves of him."

"Yes, yes! have rid our—"

But the echo was this time left incomplete, for the fat priest had now wholly succumbed to sleep, and an occasional snore alone announced his presence. The sun, too, had now set, and the priests and their visitor could but faintly distinguish one another in the fast-failing light.

"I am sorry that we were thus disturbed in our conversation, but let us dismiss the manikin from our minds. I wish these two Anabaptists would make their appearance and report what they have done, for I want"—and here he bent toward the priest and whispered in his ear—"to make a visit to—"

"Whom do you mean, noble sir?" inquired the other, feigning ignorance.

"The man down in the subterranean vault."

"Your broth—"

"Hush! do not speak that word," said the noble, pointing to the fat priest. "That name must never pass our lips."

"His Reverence is fast asleep," said the priest, with a sneer, "and you have nothing to fear here. No one can hear us."

"Nevertheless, we cannot be too cautious. My honor, my fortune and my happiness depend upon

this secret being kept, and your own gain is involved in it. Here is the money you are accustomed to receive from me monthly." So saying, he handed the priest some gold-pieces, which the latter immediately hid within the pocket of an inner vestment.

"You are right, noble lord," assented the priest; "it must remain our secret. Now tell me why you wish to visit his cell."

"I want to press him once more to relinquish his dignities and possessions in my favor. If he refuses— Well, no sounds can penetrate the walls of his dungeon. I believe that you and I are perfectly justified in keeping him in confinement. On the one hand, he is an apostate to our holy mother Church; on the other hand, he abused his riches in furthering heresy. I will tell him that he has already been declared dead in the state records, and that I, as his daughter's guardian, shall marry her and keep control over her possessions. I desire him to furnish me with some token that I may use to prove that such marriage is in accordance with his dying wish, but it is difficult to persuade him to this."

"At least, our efforts have thus far been in vain. But suppose you promise him his freedom?"

"His freedom!" exclaimed the noble. "What are you thinking of, Your Reverence?"

"Do you not reflect," rejoined the priest, "that promising and fulfilling are two different things?"

You may, to obtain your desire, promise him that which prudence will compel you to postpone."

"Very true," said Lord John, receiving this piece of deep-dyed villainy as a revelation. "I shall be guided entirely by your wisdom and advice. But let us now go to him. The night-bell has rung; all is quiet in the convent, and we shall meet no one on our way. No one but you knows where he is confined?"

"Certainly not. In the first place, I alone know of the existence of the subterranean passage; and, besides, I carry the key constantly, and he receives food and drink from no other hand than mine."

"And this one?" inquired the noble, pointing to the sleeping priest.

"He? He knows nothing of the whole affair. And if he did, it would do us no harm: he is but my shadow. The only man of whom I have any fear, and on whose account we cannot be too circumspect, is Father Boniface. I shall go now and fetch our disguises. We will let our worthy brother sleep on; he will find his way to his cell when he awakes."

The priest was about to take the lead in leaving the room, when he heard the sound of footsteps upon the street outside the building. He stepped to the window, and, seeing the forms of two men whom he supposed to be the two Anabaptists, he called Lord John. The latter at once recognized

the pot-fellows of the Vrede inn, and went out to learn what they had to report. A quarter of an hour later the nobleman re-entered the vestry, when the two partners in villainy left the apartment, going to the east side of the church.

A few moments afterward a slight noise was heard in the room adjoining the vestry, and soon a small door was opened, through which Father Boniface made his way, entering the vestry as softly as he could. Passing the still-sleeping form of the fat priest, he left the vestry and carefully felt his way down the narrow steps leading to the body of the convent-chapel. He had descended but few of the steps when he felt a cold hand grasp his and heard a voice, which he at once recognized as Joris's, whisper,

"Keep hold of my hand, and I will guide you there."

"Whither?" inquired Boniface.

"After those two good-for-nothings, who undoubtedly are bent upon some deviltry. Don't you hear them? Or look: yonder you may now see the light of their lantern. Come along with me; I know every nook and corner, and can find my way in the dark just as well as by daylight. Only hold my hand."

Father Boniface and Joris slowly descended the stone steps, and soon reached a narrow passage which led back of the altar, to the centre of the

chapel. For a while they could see the faint glimmer of the lantern ahead of them, but suddenly it disappeared and they were in total darkness.

“Where now?” asked Boniface, in a whisper, clinging to the hand of Joris.

“Let me go and find out, Your Reverence,” said the dwarf; and, going forward a few steps, he bent down and placed his ear to the stone floor. “I hear them,” he whispered; “they went to the east, where the little court is. Follow me;” and, again taking the hand of his master, he conducted him to the place toward which he had heard the footsteps proceeding.

On reaching the east wall of the chapel, they found a door which led to a little court. Opening this door, the cool night-air blew upon them, and, hastening across the court, they came to the opening of a deep vault which had formerly been used as a burying-place for the monks. Descending a few steps, they stood within this vault, and would have been compelled to abandon their pursuit, as there seemed no other outlet than the opening through which they had just entered it, had not the quick eye of Joris detected a ray of light shining through a small chink on the left side. He went directly to it, and found that it was a door, which incautiously had been left the merest crack ajar. Pushing it open softly, he saw the light re-

flected along the sides of a long passageway. Entering this, Father Boniface and the dwarf carefully followed. But suddenly the light vanished again, and at the same time they heard a door closed, behind which it and its bearer evidently had disappeared. On arriving at this door they found that its planks had shrunk so as to part into great seams here and there; so that, though no objects could be clearly discerned through it, every sound within was readily conveyed to the listening pair.

The aged Father Boniface was not at all at his ease to find himself in this situation. More than once he had intimated to Joris that he wished to go back, because he thought it beneath his dignity to ferret out the designs of evil-doers in just this way; but he was urged by Joris to proceed, for the dwarf's heart burned with the desire for revenge, and he thought he saw in this exploit the chance to dig a pit for those who had insulted him. The worthy old man also was so firmly convinced that there was some crime in which these two bad men were partners that he deemed it his duty to learn just what that crime was, that thus perhaps he might obtain the means of frustrating their evil designs.

For a long time the two listened with the greatest intentness, and what they heard was more than sufficient to fill them with deep abhorrence for Lord John van Vlooswyk and the priest. Unwilling to hear more, and having now ample proof of

their rascality as well as a knowledge of the place where their victim was kept, Father Boniface drew Joris away, and they returned hastily, but noiselessly, along the way by which they had come. And they were but just in time, for scarcely had they entered the chapel when they heard the noble and the priest closing the door in the vault. Hastily concealing themselves behind a massive pillar, they allowed the plotters to pass by, and saw them enter the vestry.

"The reprobates!" muttered the dwarf. "Did you hear how Lord John beat the prisoner with his chains and what fearful oaths he uttered?"

"I heard it all," sighed Boniface, "and I wonder that God can permit it. Alas for the sorrows inflicted upon men by their fellows!"

"God will not permit it much longer, then," said the dwarf. "As sure as my name is Joris Ruikmans, I shall find means to reach the prisoner and deliver him from these villains."

"How will you bring that about, Joris? You are but a weak little creature."

"Leave that to me, worthy Father. I heard them say that they would return after a few days, and if he did not do what they wished him to do they would do with him what they thought best. I shall take care that before that time the prisoner shall be delivered from this dungeon."

"Be careful, Joris; you do not know the power

which these men possess. I had better go to the archbishop ; he will find a way to open this prison."

"I believe, reverend sir," replied the little man, "that you cherish a vain hope. The archbishop is indeed a good man, but he is an invalid and much of the time incapable of attending to business. Besides, his influence is on the wane ; and then, too, for the sake of shielding the reputation of the clergy, he would do all in his power to cover up this crime rather than expose Father Waenders to the contempt of the citizens. I think we shall have to work out this plan of deliverance ourselves, and not let any one know what we have seen and heard this evening."

Boniface saw that Joris was in the right. He and his assistant separated, each seeking his sleeping-apartment ; but Joris spent much of the night contriving what he should do to accomplish his purpose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION.

NEAR the old Smede bridge, in the city of Utrecht there stood at the time of this history a very neat dwelling-house constructed according to an ancient style of architecture. The front door was half open, and on the evening of the same day upon which the events of the few preceding chapters occurred two young men were standing upon the stoop. They held each other's hand, and seemed upon the point of parting.

"And so you remain still of the same opinion, Walter?" said the one who stood the farther away from the house.

"Why do you ask this so often, dear Arminius? I repeat what I told you a moment ago; our conversation has become longer and more serious than I expected. But I am looked for at home. I shall remember your words so frankly spoken; and when we meet again, I hope to show you the error of your views by the light of Scripture. One thing I want to say in parting: I wish you could consent not to be wise above what is written in God's word. Good-bye!"

Walter pressed the young student's hand, and Arminius, with a light-hearted "Good-night" upon his lips, turned, passed the long Smede street, and took the way to the Jufferen street, where he boarded at the house of Father Theodorus Aëmilius.

Jacob Hermans—or Arminius, as his name was Latinized, after the fashion of the times—owed his earliest instructions to this priest. After the death of Aëmilius, Arminius betook himself to Marburg, where he met with much support in his peculiar views from the celebrated scientist Rudolph Snellius. Occasionally, however, he returned to the Fatherland, studied at the newly-founded university at Leyden, and was finally sent, at the expense of the city of Amsterdam, to Geneva, to pursue his studies there. Early in the seventeenth century he became professor of theology at Leyden, promulgated phases of doctrine opposed to Calvinism and gave occasion to the great controversy—political as well as ecclesiastical—which culminated politically in the death of John of Barneveld and ecclesiastically in the famous Synod of Dort. These world-renowned events, however, took place long after Arminius's death, which occurred in the year 1609.

Walter, left alone, entered the dwelling. He had hardly crossed the threshold when the barking of a dog was heard, and a poodle which had evidently reached a great age came growling toward Walter. But as soon as the half-blind animal discerned that

it was his master his barking and growling changed into a joyous yelp, while he tried in vain to jump up and greet him as in his younger days.

“It is I, Pol, my dear old fellow! And are you so glad to see me? So am I to see you, Pol;” and he gently stroked the poodle’s hairy back. “But come, Pol; let us go in.”

Walter went in, while Pol followed him to the sitting-room, where Walter’s grandfather was busy, together with Thomas Brully, in reading the Scriptures by the light of a hanging-lamp. As Walter entered the room the aged Harmsen looked up, and, perceiving that it was his grandson, said,

“I really began to be uneasy about you, Walter. Our friend Thomas Brully is more than an hour home. Where did you stay so long?”

“I was detained by a long conversation with Arminius; but, besides that, I had a conference with a friend whom I supposed a long time dead, and whom I unexpectedly met this noon.”

“I know who it is, Walter, and am greatly rejoiced that you have found this whilom kitchen-boy in good health and in high favor. But especially gratifying must it have been to you, my son, when you, as Thomas Brully has told me, were enabled to gather from his conduct and conversation that the Lord had delivered him from darkness and called him into the kingdom of the Son of his love. But why did you not bring him with

you? You know how great an interest I take in your friends, and especially in one who is from the neighborhood of Haarlem, whence I always eagerly look for news."

"Gladly would I have done so, but he was pressed for time; for he was to report himself before night at the house of Mr. Goert van Reede, head-sheriff of the city, to whom he was carrying a letter from Count John of Nassau. Arminius and I conducted him to the house, but I obtained from him a promise that he would spend to-morrow afternoon with us—that is, if his duties did not call him elsewhere."

"Did he not arrange with Arminius to take a walk early to-morrow morning to visit the environs of the city?" asked Thomas Brully.

"I believe so. And, by the way, that reminds me of a request that he wished me to make of you—if you will be so kind as to bring a Bible to him at the house of Mr. Goert van Reede this evening."

"With great pleasure," replied his friend; and, taking a Bible from the table, he arose and left the room.

"I cannot account it evil in you, Walter," said the old man, "that you should have left your grandfather in suspense for a few hours for the sake of a dear friend, but now that you have come I expect you to tell me something about your labors at Vlooswyk. Did you see Jacoba to-day?"

A quick blush spread over the young man's face but fortunately the old man could not perceive this, because Walter stood in the shade of the lamp. He speedily recovered his composure, however, and, seating himself upon a chair by the side of his grandfather, replied,

"No; I did not meet the heiress of Vlooswyk to-day."

"Then your journey thither was fruitless?"

"I cannot say that. But listen as I tell you this day's experiences. Arminius and Thomas Brully had planned, as you know, to visit Amersfoort in order to witness with their own eyes the change in favor of the Reformation which had there taken place; I joined them in order to have their company as far as Vlooswyk. I visited many homes of the peasantry, and was rejoiced to notice the prosperity which the Lord has accorded to my labors. Toward noon I took the road to Castle Ter Heide, which had been fixed upon among us as a rendezvous for the return home; but a heavy shower compelled me to look about for shelter. I was fortunate in soon discovering a farmhouse, and I took refuge at once in the adjoining barn. I found, however, that I was not the only one who had there been accommodated. My place in the barn gave me the opportunity of hearing all that was said in the sitting-room, and, although I did my utmost not to play the part of an eavesdropper,

I could not prevent myself from overhearing the conversation in the next room."

"And did you recognize the persons engaged in this conversation?"

"I knew at once who they were, from their voices. They were the preachers Nicholas Sopingius and Wernerus Helmichius."

"Ha! My dear friends the preachers appointed by the magistrates to minister to the Reformed congregation in the city. No wonder you knew them at once. And what were they discussing?"

"I was compelled, as I said, to listen for some time; then, feeling that it was not right to remain longer an unseen auditor, I left the barn and entered the house."

"And how did they receive you?"

"At first they were very cordial, but we had scarcely conversed for half an hour when their cordiality grew appreciably less."

"And what was the cause of this?" inquired Walter's grandfather, in surprise.

"Oh, our different ways of looking at things. To my sorrow, I was again forced to observe that religious questions, instead of uniting men's hearts, sometimes only estrange them from one another. Sopingius was much more reasonable than Helmichius, for, although the former insisted much on his ecclesiastical views, he nevertheless rejoiced that, in whatever way, souls were made acquainted with

the truth. Helmichius, on the contrary, was too passionate to judge impartially ; he called me fool-hardy, an introducer of novelties, and more of the same sort."

"Those were hard words, Walter."

"Yes, and I took the liberty of quoting what Paul wrote to Timothy : 'And the servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.' But this seemed only to make matters worse. Helmichius declared that he was a preacher called of God to the office and its functions, and as such he could not approve of my labors. I told him that I equally felt called of God to preach the gospel, and that, though there were slight differences of opinion, this ought not to prevent our working together for the spread of God's kingdom."

"And what could they reply to that ?"

"Sopingius partially agreed with me, but Helmichius persisted in affirming that as long as I held aloof from an ecclesiastical connection he would not labor with me, and he impatiently rose and left the room, saying that he would have nothing more to do with me."

"You have, then, made another enemy. I am afraid you will eventually get all Utrecht against you, my son."

"Possibly, but I will not complain if it is simply the Helmichian Utrecht. It is a sad thing when

men strive more to build up a Church than to advance the cause of Christ. If Helmichius really loved souls, what would it matter to him how they were led to Christ and blessed with his salvation?"

"You are severe in your judgment, my son. You have no right to say that he, and others like him, have more regard for the Church than for the saving of souls. I believe that they follow the path of good order in their zeal for fixed and definite churchly institutions. Of course they and Helmichius should exhibit more of the spirit of love. But really, Walter, you cannot continue upon this way that you have marked out for yourself; you will soon stand all alone, and you will be as Ishmael, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him."

"I am deeply grieved, dear grandfather, that you, whom I love so dearly, do not sympathize with me; yet even this cannot shake my firm conviction that to this particular work—the work of an evangelist, as Paul himself distinguishes it—I am called. 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!' And I believe, too, that there are both a place and a necessity for just this untrammelled, unpretending evangelistic work among the masses who are still under the spell of Rome. When great numbers shall have been brought to the light and the Reformation has spread over the land, there will then be great necessity for orderly institutions, and

let some labor at perfecting these now if they will. But let me do my work and they theirs, and unitedly let us advance the blessed kingdom. But why should we denounce and oppose one another and confound the minds of the simple?"

"Poor Walter!" sighed the old man, shaking his head; "how I tremble for you! The times are not yet ripe for such ideas, and you will be misunderstood. I am too old to hope to see the times grow different, and so I foresee for you nothing but opposition and persecution. You will be a rock of offence to all parties. Passion will take the place of reason, and enmity that of charity; and I fear you will soon follow your dear father to the grave."

"You picture my future in rather dismal colors, grandfather, and I am afraid there is much truth in what you say; but my firm trust is in Christ. Let the world, even though it be the ecclesiastical world, forsake me; the Lord will be near. He sees and knows my heart."

The old man was about to reply, when Pol began to growl, and some one was heard at the front door. Walter left the room, and, returning after a few moments, said,

"It is a note or message handed to me by what seemed to be a boy of about twelve years. But I could not tell in the darkness."

"And how does it read?"

"'Beware of the two priests of the convent of

Our Lady, who have planned with Lord van Vlooswyk to make attempts upon your liberty or your life.' Your prophecy seems really hastening to its fulfillment," said Walter, laying the missive upon the table. "That the Lord van Vlooswyk is my enemy I can readily comprehend, but why the two priests have anything against me I do not see, for I am not even acquainted with them."

"Such enemies are the most dangerous, Walter; we can be on our guard against an open foe. Yet I cannot say that we are wholly unacquainted with the priests, for I lately met the librarian of the convent at the house of Aëmilius, and he spoke of them."

"Father Boniface, do you mean?"

"The same. And I should not be at all surprised if this warning came from him."

"Well, I shall not despise the warning, and shall be as cautious as possible. But over-against all enemies, seen or unseen, known or unknown, my Refuge is Christ, my Strength and my Redeemer."

Walter and his grandfather continued their conversation until the return of Thomas Brully. They then all partook of a frugal meal, and after a season spent in family worship they separated and retired to rest.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CAMP OF THE ANABAPTISTS.

A SHORT ride by carriage or on horseback or a not too fatiguing walk to the east of Utrecht brings one to the beautiful little village of Zeist, surrounded by undulating heaths and woods of fir trees. In former days this village was of much greater size and importance than at present; many seats of noblemen were found in the vicinity, among which Rysenburg and Karsbergen were not the least considerable. In the year 1428 the village was plundered by the insurrectionary people of the neighboring province of Gelderland and every house razed to the ground, and it was a full century before it recovered its previous prosperity.

At the time of our tale there was at a distance of about two miles from the castle of Karsbergen an extensive sandy plain so hidden among hills covered with woods of evergreens that it was not easily discovered by the chance traveler. On the morning of the day after the encounter in the Vrede inn a visit to this sandy plain would have revealed an interesting scene. In its centre stood a large

tent surrounded by twenty to thirty smaller ones. The large tent was constructed of blue-colored fabric; high above its peak fluttered a white banner bearing the device of a castle with the words "Zion's Fortress" inscribed beneath. The other tents were of ordinary canvas. No one was to be seen moving among the tents; so that the visitor might readily have come to the conclusion that they were uninhabited. Could his penetrating glance have thoroughly scrutinized the edge of the woods, however, he would have discovered that at brief intervals men lay concealed beneath the underbrush. They were evidently on the watch for any intrusion on that side, and prepared to dispute the approach of strangers.

Silence reigned throughout the camp; so perfect was the quiet that rested upon the plain that the occasional spears of grass, refreshed by the abundant rain of the previous day and quickened by the rising sun, seemed scarce to feel the breath of the morning breeze that was moving over the hills and agitating the snow-white banner. Suddenly, however, this profound silence was broken. A strong voice, apparently proceeding from the principal tent, began to sing the first slow notes of a solemn hymn, and no sooner had these notes become audible in the surrounding tents than on every side voices were heard to join in the measured hymn or chant, until the whole plain resounded with the singing.

Even at a distance one would have at once concluded that this was a religious song. It was set to the music of Claude Goudimel,* being sung in four parts. If our supposed visitor had come sufficiently near, he would have distinguished the following words, adapted from the forty-fifth psalm :

“The King rides forth in majesty,
And speaketh words of clemency ;
The nations all shall he subdue.
His arrows sharp their mark attain,
On Zion he as King shall reign,
And none his mighty arm eschew.”

For more than an hour hymns like this rose from every tent in the camp ; then the former silence prevailed for a brief season, only to be succeeded, however, by a noise and uproar hardly to be expected in so solitary a place and after such solemn and devout an exercise of song. Amid this uproar the folds of the tents were thrown aside, and several men and women made their appearance. They waved their arms wildly and acted as if they were hastening to battle, while they called to one another responsively :

“Death and destruction to all those who dwell

* Claude Goudimel was born near Avignon, France, about 1510, and perished at Lyons, a St. Bartholomew victim, on August 24, 1572. In 1565 he published a collection of vocal pieces, a setting of the celebrated French version of the psalms by Marot and Beza. It is written in four parts, the melody being assigned to the tenor.—TRANSLATOR.

not in Zion! Death and destruction to all who baptize children, to all priests and preachers! Death and destruction to all magistrates and earthly potentates!"

After this other voices were again heard to sing in a somewhat different measure:

"Only we God's people are;
Naught for earth's proud kings we care,
But to Zion's King are loyal.
He bestows true liberty,
And conducts us safe till we
Dwell within his palace royal."

The last line had scarcely been sung when the loud and uproarious shouting was resumed.

This seemed to conclude the morning devotions of the Anabaptists, for it was a camp of these peculiar people that we have been describing. Now there appeared a multitude of men, women and children armed with various cooking-utensils or carrying articles of food; they all repaired to a small open space which evidently served as the open-air kitchen for the whole camp. Soon a bright fire blazed; pots and kettles were brought into requisition, and, while some of the women busied themselves with kneading the dough, preparatory to bread-baking, a number of the men arranged a temporary framework for suspending the spit.

All the women were busily occupied with the

preparations for the morning meal, except one, who sat quietly and alone at the entrance of one of the tents. Her countenance was pale and bore evidences of great suffering. She could not have been more than six and thirty years of age, but sorrow had engraved such deep lines upon her brow that many would have supposed her much older. She looked about her with restless glances, and her eyes fell occasionally with a vacant stare upon her companions engaged at a little distance from her. Suddenly she uttered a piercing cry, greatly startling the Anabaptists.

“What is that?” asked one of the women engaged in preparing the bread.

All had turned in the direction whence the cry came; and when it was repeated, another woman answered:

“It is the Gelderland woman. She begins her morning song rather early to-day.”

“Perhaps she is hungry,” remarked a third, mockingly.

“Maybe she wants some more chastisement,” laughed another.

“Possibly,” said one of the men, cutting a piece off the roasting flesh to see if it were done; “yesterday she was quiet all day after it.”

“I am afraid that her fits are coming on again,” said another man. “Whenever we are in this part of the country, it seems as if she could not be kept

quiet. I have heard her moanings for years, but she never breaks out into those shrieks except when she is in this neighborhood. I wish we were well rid of her, for she gives us much trouble. Often have we spoken to our master about it, but he always tells us to say nothing on that subject—that it is his private affair.”

“But why does she moan so constantly and shriek so often?” asked a young woman who was nursing her babe and seemed to pity the poor woman.

“Ask her yourself,” replied the last speaker; “it may be you can make something of her prattle. Tell her, however, that if she does not keep quiet our master will do with her as John of Leyden did with his wife: when she would not obey him, he punished her as she deserved. Tell her that, and she’ll not cry out so; for she is in great dread of death.”

The young mother who had been touched with compassion for the poor unfortunate went to the tent before which the woman still sat crouching on the ground, and, seating herself by her side, she laid her hand upon her bare arm and said in a gentle, friendly tone of voice,

“Why do you moan and cry so much?”

The one addressed lifted her eyes for a moment, looked searchingly into those of her questioner, as if she would test her sincerity, and then dropped

her head once more until the chin nearly rested upon her bosom.

“Can you not tell me what ails you?” again asked the young mother, taking her babe from the breast.

No answer.

At this moment the babe began to cry; this seemed to make an impression upon the Gelderland woman, as she was called. At least, she raised her head, and, staring in her wild way at the infant, she stammered,

“Jacoba!”

“Yes; that’s the little one’s name. But how did you know?”

The woman made no answer. Her gaze remained fixed upon the babe; and when the babe ceased to cry and opened its blue eyes wide, the same name escaped her a second time.

“You are a strange woman,” said the mother, putting her child again to the breast. “Won’t you answer a kind question? Can’t you tell me why you keep by yourself so much and utter such sad cries from time to time?”

But the woman remained mute; she had no eyes but for the child. Suddenly she brushed her hair from her forehead with her hand, and after remaining apparently absorbed in thought for several minutes she seized the child by the arm before the mother could prevent it and sought to force the child from her. But the young woman struck her

hand loose with a strong blow, and when the Gelderland woman attempted to seize the child a second time called to the other women, who quickly came to her aid.

"Why did you do this?" asked one of the women, somewhat roughly.

But she gave no reply. Her head fell once more upon her bosom, and she uttered softly the name,

"Jacoba!"

"Oh, let the poor fool go!" exclaimed one of the men, impatiently. "You had better help us with the preparation of the meal. Soon it will be breakfast-time, and we shall not be ready."

"Yes, yes! Come!" cried others. "Why trouble yourselves about her? She is having her spring fit; but if she don't take care, a fall storm will soon follow it. Come!"

The men, women and children who had run together when the young mother called for help left the Gelderland woman again to herself and returned to the place where they were preparing the meal. The mother, however, remained near the unfortunate's tent, saying to herself,

"The poor woman seems affected in her mind. By and by, when the child is asleep, I must try again to have a talk with her; for I really do pity her. Perhaps my babe recalls one of her own, and—"

At this instant a shrill whistle was heard in the

direction of the woods, which was repeated twice, and then three times. A few moments later similar sounds were heard to proceed from the blue tent.

"What does that mean?" said one of the men who had recently joined the company.

"That means a visitor," replied one of the initiated. "Our pickets, who are stationed along the edge of the woods, announced it by their whistles, and the whistling heard in reply from the blue tent shows that our master is prepared to receive him."

"Do you not know who it is?" asked one of the women, inquisitively.

"How should *I* know? Our master takes counsel only with the elders. I believe, however, that this is quite an important visit and has something to do with Gysbert Barends's and Cornelis Koen's errand. We'll soon know if it's of any importance."

"Do you suspect anything?"

"I believe something is to take place at Utrecht that will give us all work to do. I just learned by accident yesterday that the magistracy is taking measures to have us removed from the province."

"I hardly think that," said another Anabaptist. "Utrecht has its hands full in settling the disputes between the ecclesiastical parties, and cannot give much thought to us, who are peacefully dwelling outside of her limits. But there is much disturb-

ance at Amersfoort—the Reformed there want to drag every image from the churches—and I should not wonder if there were some fighting to be done in that place pretty soon.”

“If that’s the case,” said the first speaker, “we’ll be sure to get some advantage out of it, for usually one party calls in our help against the other.”

“Ha, ha!” laughed they all. “That wouldn’t be so bad, for we haven’t had any luck for a good while.”

Just now the whistling in the woods was repeated; and when all turned their eyes in that direction, they saw two men leaving the underbrush to the south of the camp. These we recognize at once as the pot-fellows of the Vrede inn. They were, however, accompanied by a man seated upon a splendid gray war-horse. When the visitor had proceeded but a little distance from the woods, a trumpet sounded from the blue tent. At this all the men and women took their utensils and implements and hastened to their several tents, which they closed after them. In a few minutes nothing more was seen of the crowd that had been collected at the cooking-place, nor was a sound heard except that of the whispering of a few inquisitive or uninitiated ones, who peered through the openings of the tents in the hope of discovering something of what was about to take place.

When all had vanished, the large blue tent was

opened, and the chief of the Anabaptists, King John Williams, made his appearance. This notorious leader was clad in a blue-velvet cloak with golden borders ornamented with flowers embroidered in silver thread. Accompanied by his oldest followers—commonly called “apostles”—he passed by the tents of his deluded adherents to meet the cavalier, who was rapidly approaching the camp.

When the visitor reached the tent where a little while before the young mother had sought to engage the crazed woman in conversation, a piercing shriek suddenly and startingly broke upon the stillness.

“Gysbert Barends,” said the Anabaptist king—and his sinister countenance assumed a malignant expression—“enter the tent of the Gelderland woman and tell her that if she does not keep silence I shall surely visit upon her fitting punishment.”

Barends bowed reverently before the king and entered the tent. The visiting cavalier had momentarily turned in the direction of the outcry, and now, addressing John Williams, inquired,

“Who was it that shrieked?”

“It is a poor crazed woman, Lord John van Vlooswyk,” replied the chief; “the spring fit is upon her.”

The nobleman turned slightly pale, but, recovering himself, he alighted from his horse and threw

the bridle to Cornelis Koen, who tied the animal in the rear of the principal tent.

It seemed, however, that Gysbert Barends found the task of silencing the Gelderland woman no easy one, for more than once screams were heard to proceed from her tent. At a sign from the Anabaptist king two or three men went in to assist their comrade. But now matters seemed to grow worse than ever; a struggle ensued, in which the crazed woman appeared more than a match for the strong men, for before Lord John had entered the large tent the smaller one was violently thrown open, and in a paroxysm of fury the Gelderland woman rushed upon the nobleman, followed by Barends and three other men, who had in vain sought to detain her.

Lord John drew back and attempted to enter the blue tent, but the woman prevented him, and, confronting the nobleman, she bent upon him a look full of wild rage.

“What will you have, poor unfortunate?” inquired Lord John, not at all at his ease, and with a visible shudder shaking himself loose from the hand which she had laid upon his arm.

At the sound of the nobleman’s voice it seemed as if the crazed woman was endeavoring to collect her thoughts; she drew the palm of her hand over her forehead, as if to recall where she had heard that voice before. A moment after, her eyes again

gleamed wildly, and, bending a fixed look upon the nobleman, she said,

“Where is Gerard? Did you not bring Jacoba with you?”

The noble's face grew deathly pale, and he tried to push her aside; but the excited woman was at this moment stronger than he, for she held him still by the outstretched arm, and, once more fixing that penetrating look upon him, she repeated the question.

“I know not what you mean, woman,” said the nobleman, whose courage was fast failing him. “Let me go, or I shall use severer means of ridding myself of your grasp. I know you not;” and again, at hearing his voice, the crazed woman drew her hand across her forehead.

“Come! enough of this!” said John Williams to the Gelderland woman at this juncture. At the sound of these words a shudder trembled through all her frame. “You have completely exhausted my patience.—Men and brethren, take her and conduct her to her tent. Guard her carefully, and by and by, when I have a more fitting opportunity, I will speak to her.”

The men were about to obey their master's command, and had seized the woman by the arms, but as her mental powers departed from her those of her body seemed to increase in proportion. She tore herself loose from her assailants, and, now flinging her-

self upon the astounded nobleman, she encircled his neck with her hands and held him as in a vise :

“Gerard ! Jacoba ! Where is my child ?”

The lord of Vlooswyk could not speak ; the woman was choking him to death, and the powerful man would have fallen to the ground if the Anabaptists had not hastened to his assistance and freed him from the maniac’s grasp.

“Take her away ! take her away !” cried John Williams. “Tie her fast in her tent !”

With united strength Barends and Koen succeeded in dragging the crazed woman as far as the entrance of her tent ; but when she reached this, she once more tore herself loose, and, escaping from their hands, fled with the swiftness of the hunted deer across the sandy plain and made her way directly to the woods.

“Pursue her ! pursue her !” exclaimed John Williams and the nobleman in one breath.

The men did not wait to be told a second time ; but if the woman had proven herself their superior in muscular strength, there was no comparison between the swiftness of her flight and their clumsy attempts to follow. She had penetrated into the depths of the wood before they had reached the edge of it, and all efforts to find her proved fruitless.

The men returned to their chief to report their failure, but he commanded them immediately to

resume their search, and not to come back without the fugitive.

Lord John was extremely annoyed at the escape of the woman, and still more so at the failure of the men to capture her; but the Anabaptist king assured him that his men would soon recover her, and the nobleman was fain to remain content with this, and entered the blue tent. There, even in the midst of the evil plans which Lord John sought to mature with the aid of his accomplice, he often shuddered as he thought of the narrow escape he had had at the hands of the crazed woman.

When the two men had seated themselves within the tent, the elders withdrew; whereupon John Williams opened a chest and took from it some papers.

"Tell me first," said the nobleman, "ere we discuss our affairs, how is it that *she* is still in these regions?"

"Because she is one of us, Lord John," replied Williams, coolly.

"I thought, however, that you and I came to an agreement fourteen years ago that you would do away with her—or, at least, take her far enough away from here to prevent her troubling us?"

"We did indeed come to such an agreement, Lord John, but several reasons have induced me to refrain from carrying it out. First of all, she has joined our fellowship."

“A crazy woman! Well, your communion must have gained little by that!”

“That is my own affair, Lord John. However, it is only in the spring that she is unbalanced; but as soon as the summer advances she is much better settled in mind, and is able to entertain several matters intelligently—in fact, many which had better not be known by outsiders. Hence I have to watch her very closely.”

“Yes, you watch her finely, if what I have just seen is a specimen of your vigilance.”

“That amounts to nothing; she will be back in camp in a very short time.”

“May I ask you what other reasons you have for carrying her about with you over the country? If I had apprehended this, I would have taken different measures to guard her, I assure you.”

“I trust you will bear in mind the conditions upon which I consented to take charge of this woman?” replied John Williams. “I believe to-day is just the date for fulfilling one of these conditions.”

“Certainly! I was to pay you a sum of money yearly as long as she should live.”

“Well, is she not alive?” inquired King John, naively.

“Ah! and now I perceive the chief of the reasons why you have not taken the pains to do away with her: you do not wish to kill the goose that

lays the golden eggs. Truly, I admire the acuteness which your avarice has taught you."

"We surely need not find fault with each other's motives, Lord John," remarked John Williams, coldly; "you stretch out your hands to possess yourself of Vlooswyk, while I take pleasure in doing a friend a good turn. May I again read you the contract which was concluded between us?"

"No; keep that document to yourself: I know the contents but too well. But I trust that this will be the last annual installment that you will get from me. Six weeks from to-day Jacoba will be of age, and then the time will not be far distant when I shall make her inheritance lawfully my own by marriage with her."

"And what then is to become of *her*?"

"Oh! of *her*?" said Lord John, with cold indifference. "Why, no one will believe what a crazy woman says. Besides, if you will not promise me that she will be out of the way in six weeks' time, I can find other means of ridding myself of her."

"By the aid of a murder?" suggested Williams, laconically.

"Does that seem so strange to your mind?" said Lord John. "Is it not your motto that everything on earth is yours, and that nothing can stand in the way of your attaining your ends?"

"You are severe, Lord John," remarked the Anabaptist king, with provoking coolness.

“Truth usually hits hard, does it not?” sneered Lord John.

“Very likely; but I, in my turn, can deal in some cutting truths.”

“And what are they?” inquired the nobleman, scornfully.

“That Lady Gerard van Vlooswyk—”

“Speak not that name!” interrupted Lord John, looking anxiously around the tent and turning pale.

“No one can hear us, Lord John. But if that name offends you, let me say that this woman will remain with me until my earthly course be run, unless—” and he hesitated.

“Well, unless what?” inquired Lord John, with eager impatience.

“Unless the goose should cease to lay the golden eggs.”

“If, then, I withhold the yearly moneys, you would rid yourself of her presence?”

“Exactly; and I would send her to John of Nassau,” coolly remarked the chief.

“To my deadly enemy?”

“The same; he will doubtless furnish me with other golden eggs, and grant me, besides, the privilege of remaining as long as I please in these regions.”

“I see that I have to deal with an old fox.”

“Who would gladly serve the lion, provided the latter—”

"Will furnish him with plenty of prey. I understand you. But let me hear what are your conditions."

"I can't tell you now," said John Williams. "A wise householder finishes his old affairs before troubling himself with new ones. Eight days from now I will let you know my new conditions. Meanwhile, I am burning with curiosity to find what is the real object of your coming to-day."

"I will tell you," said Lord John; and he proceeded to lay before the Anabaptist chief the plan which we have already heard him communicate to the priests of St. Servatius. The details of that plan, as arranged between these accomplices, will appear farther on.

About an hour afterward the nobleman left the camp, accompanied by two men to the edge of the woods. Lord John, however, did not take the road to his castle, but chose one in an opposite direction, leading northward, to the city of Amersfoort.

CHAPTER XX.

THE KINGDOM THROUGH TRIBULATION.

AT the same time that Lord John van Vlooswyk was preparing to visit the camp of the Anabaptists, an irrepressible longing drove Walter Harmsen to seek Vlooswyk castle.

It was a beautiful morning. The heavy showers had ceased, and Nature seemed to enjoy the rest after the continuous storms of the last few days. A warm spring sun hastened the development of the bursting leaf-buds and caused an early spring flower here and there to bloom in beauty. The beech and linden trees surrounding the castle stood glorying in the pride of their fresh young foliage. Thousands of birds sprang from branch to branch and trilled forth their uncontrollable gladness, while occasionally a prudent couple, half hid among the foliage, might be seen planning or building the tiny nest where soon the young mother must lay her eggs and raise her tuneful family.

Soon after sunrise Walter found himself on the road between the house Ter Heide and Vlooswyk. For what he had come he could not precisely ex-

plain to himself. He had slept scarcely an hour during the preceding night, for the warnings addressed to him by his grandfather were not entirely baseless. He was also impatiently awaiting the morrow, on which he should again meet his friend the ensign. As he would not be able to have his company till afternoon, he determined to pass the forenoon at Vlooswyk, return at midday and spend the rest of the day with Dirk. Besides, he needed some moments of solitude; he wished to enjoy uninterrupted communion with God, to take sweet counsel with him and to seek wisdom and comfort to guide and sustain him in all the difficulties that seemed to be crowding upon him. Thus he sought to account to himself for being at so early an hour near the castle of Vlooswyk, occupying a partially concealed position among some underbrush growing on the edge of the woods and skirting the high-road. But the chief reason was as yet undefined.

Penetrating the wood still farther, Walter seated himself upon the trunk of a fallen tree. While himself completely hidden from the view of one coming along the road, he could descry any one's approach. He had been seated here for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when he was disturbed in his meditations by approaching voices and footsteps. He looked to see who could be paying a visit to the castle at so early an hour, when, to his surprise, he perceived that it was the lodgekeeper of the

castle, accompanied by two servants of the head-sheriff of Utrecht. They were engaged in earnest conversation, and Walter plainly distinguished the following words :

“I repeat it, you cannot see Lord John this morning. He has just left the castle on horseback, and, as he is not accustomed to tell us where he goes, I cannot inform you where you may find him or when he will return.”

“Then you will surely permit us to await his return at the castle?”

“I am not at liberty to grant this,” said the lodge-keeper; “admission to the castle is strictly forbidden to every one except with the express leave of Lord John.”

“But what if we tell you that we have come by the command of Goert van Reede, head-sheriff of Utrecht?”

“This can make no difference to me, for I am simply to fulfill the orders that have been given me. But I shall gladly convey a message from you to my master.”

“We charge you, then, to invite Lord John van Vlooswyk, in the name of His Honor the Head-Sheriff, within three days—”

Walter could hear no more, as the men had now passed out of earshot. Seating himself once more, he wondered what the head-sheriff could want with the nobleman, and the thought struck him whether

Dirk Gapertz and his message to that officer had anything to do with it.

Another half hour of uninterrupted meditation was now enjoyed by Walter; his musings wandered back to the past, and he could not but be thankful as he contemplated the blessing of God upon his unpretending method of work. It was with special vividness that he thought of the time when he first began his evangelistic labors in the vicinity of this castle. Upon the road he had met the forester, who hospitably invited him to rest a while and partake of some refreshment in his dwelling, which was near. Walter had gratefully accepted his hospitality, and, having found a good opportunity, he had begun to speak of the subject uppermost in heart and mind. The forester had manifested much indifference, but his wife gave Walter close and eager attention. After a while the forester, under pretext that he had various matters to attend to, had left the house; but Walter continued to converse with the woman, announcing to her the hope and the comfort that are the portion of every one who accepts the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

While Walter had been thus engaged in conversation with the wife of the forester the door had opened, and another visitor announced herself. It was the heiress of Vlooswyk, a light-hearted young lady of some fifteen summers. She darted into the room and kissed the children, and, seeing tears in

the eyes of the forester's wife, she had with much concern inquired as to their cause. Walter quietly answered in the woman's stead and explained as clearly as he could what had moved her thus, and by a loving presentation of the gospel succeeded in making a good impression upon the maiden's heart. All was new to her. She had never yet heard of the teachings of the Reformation, and, although there was much that she could not understand, a voice within her seemed to say that this was indeed the truth of God.

Since that day Walter had frequently visited the forester's house and had given his wife a Bible, and more than once it had happened that Lady Jacoba, the heiress of Vlooswyk, had also been present. Walter thus had an opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with her, and he had found her to be of a very winning disposition, combining simplicity and childlikeness, while yet she was womanly and inclined to thoughtfulness. She soon formed the firm resolution to serve the Lord, and, although Walter had pointed out to her that if she remained faithful to that resolve she would be exposed to many tribulations, she had put him to shame by the unshaken faith and trust she placed in the Saviour whom he had preached unto her.

And, indeed, the young lady did endure tribulation. Her uncle and guardian was very angry with the maiden, who ventured to declare to him

her purpose of leaving a Church which did dishonor to the perfect efficacy of Christ's blood by its doctrine of the mass, and which held other teachings directly in conflict with God's word. He placed restrictions upon the freedom of her intercourse with those whom he suspected of being adherents of the new faith; he brought priests to the castle to reclaim her by argument or threats of the wrath of the Church. He had also traced her conversion to Walter Harmsen, and he endeavored with special eagerness to prevent her meeting him, and, as she knew, he sought Walter's life. He would undoubtedly have taken severer measures with her if he had not been actuated by motives of avarice and wished to secure her affection, so as to gain possession of her estates by marriage.

These were the recollections that occupied Walter's thoughts. He was on the point of going on his way, when the chattering of the squirrels attracted his attention, and, casting his eyes down the road, he saw at a distance a young maiden coming toward his resting-place. He had no difficulty in recognizing in this maidenly form the heiress of Vlooswyk. How lovely was her appearance! Tall and slender of build, she seemed like one of those spring flowers ready to bud forth into maturity. Her stature as well as her intelligent countenance seemed to indicate a maiden of eighteen, but her clear eye and her simple bearing betrayed the more

childlike age which she had really attained. She was clad in the picturesque attire of the sixteenth century. Her long fair hair, escaping in abundant tresses from beneath a green-silk cap, flowed down upon her shoulders and about her neck, which by reason of the coolness of the morning was encircled with a collar of ermine. A bodice of pink silk closely fitted to the waist terminated in a border of green lace; the broadcloth overskirt proceeding from beneath this gay bodice was looped up in front, to prevent interference with walking, and thus revealed an underskirt of a many-colored material.

Walter's eyes remained immovably fixed upon the young lady as she approached. The nearer she came, the more rapid became the pulsations of his heart. A feeling of tender yearning swept over his soul, much the same as that which fills the heart of a mother when she looks fondly upon her child. That feeling might indeed have been designated by the name "love," but differed greatly from that which is ordinarily awakened in the heart of a young man for a young maiden of such loveliness and worth. The difference in their stations, but, above all, the work to which he had deliberately consecrated himself, made it comparatively easy for him to banish this kind of tenderness. To assert that there was nothing akin to it in Walter's heart would bespeak him too superhuman to be a suitable hero for our story, but the other and holier

love for one who was one of the first-fruits of his labors for Christ, and sympathized with him in the service of Christ, so far overshadowed the more earthly sentiment as to leave him undisturbed and happy in the cultivation of this friendship. When she came nearer, he could see that her cheeks were more than usually pale.

“Can anything extraordinary have happened to her?” Walter began to muse. “How changed she is since last I saw her! When I think of the day upon which I first met her, and make comparison between the lady of Vlooswyk as she was then and as she is now, I must indeed rejoice in the change which has come over her innermost experiences; but I have reason to deplore the external change from an unclouded happiness to care and sorrow. I may rejoice—God be praised!—that the preaching of the gospel was not without effect upon her heart, but I regret the domestic persecution which this has entailed upon her. God grant that his grace may sustain her in fighting the good fight of faith!”

While Walter was thus communing with himself, the heiress of Vlooswyk had reached a spot in the road directly opposite Walter; for one moment the youth’s heart beat tumultuously, for her loveliness was irresistibly fascinating to him. Surely this love that beat within his heart was more than a brother’s love for a sister? But reason and the

grace of God made him in the next moment conqueror over this sudden upwelling of an affection that was otherwise so natural, and he became calm again and strong to meet her in an unaffected, brotherly manner—a brother, above all, in the love of Christ.

The girl stood directly opposite him, seemingly plunged in deep thought, unconscious of any one's observation. Walter now bent aside the low branches of the beech trees and stepped forth from his place of concealment. The noise of his approach through the underbrush startled her, but a single look was sufficient for recognition; a scarcely-perceptible flush overspread her pale features, and with the words, "Walter, you here?" she stretched out her hands toward him, as much to greet him as to indicate the need of his assistance in her present state of mind.

Walter quickly took the proffered hands, and, pressing them cordially, said,

"What grieves you, lady? Why are you so pale?"

Jacoba buried her face in her hands and replied, "I am not well."

"That is not all that troubles you," observed Walter, decisively. "Why should you hide your trouble from me?"

The maiden gave him a quick, grateful look of confidence and said,

"I cannot conceal from you that I suffer greatly—very greatly; but," she added, with a bright smile, "now that I see you, it seems as if it were all over and I had nothing more to fear. How glad am I to meet you! Do you know that you have been very unkind?"

"I?" asked Walter, surprised.

"Yes, you. Eight days you have left me without any sign from you. Do you know that eight days are wellnigh eight years to a prisoner? But do not let us dwell on that; I am so glad to see you that I forgive your neglect."

"But why do you conceal from me the cause of your suffering? Do you know so little of me that you will not grant me the right to know? If you suffer, I also suffer; for says not the scripture if 'one member suffer, all the members suffer with it'?"

The girl's eyes filled with tears, and she answered,

"I know it, but I would not cause you grief on my account; therefore I would rather not tell you all I have to endure. But I suffer nothing now that you are with me. I hope you will grant me your society during a few hours. Lord John went away early this morning, and will certainly not return till evening. I have so much to ask you to which I *must* have an answer that I will not soon let you go."

"Let us take this lane; at the other end of it is

the forester's house," said Walter. "There we can rest ourselves and talk, and the good wife will no doubt be glad to join in the conversation."

To this the maiden readily agreed, and they wended their way to the forester's home. As they walked she began to give Walter an insight into the spiritual troubles that oppressed her. She wished to serve the Lord and confess him, but she also felt that she ought to be doing something to win others to him :

"And the saddest of all is when I think of those nearest to me, my own kin. When I think of them, my heart condemns me that I have done nothing to make those in daily contact with me acquainted with the glorious truths of the gospel. Oh, do pray for me that the Lord may give me courage, for that is just what I lack. Whenever I see Lord John, my heart is filled with pain; he leads a godless life and annoys me constantly with demonstrations of his affection. It is possible that he is anxious to execute his guardianship faithfully; but if he loved me as a relative, he would not daily grieve me with exhibitions of coarseness. And, besides this, there is—" She ceased speaking, for she imagined that what she was about to say might possibly not be agreeable to Walter.

"Go on, I pray you, Lady Jacoba. What more is there?"

Jacobica seemed to be in a dilemma, but Walter's

look of cordial interest decided her, and she continued :

“ Oh, I cannot hide anything from you : you are my dear brother, and, next to God, the only one to whom I can open my heart, and who will give me counsel and comfort. I will inform you what has brought a pallor to my cheeks and makes me tremble for myself. Late last night my guardian returned from Utrecht. I was in my room, and was engaged in prayer with my nurse, Hanna, who also has received the glad tidings with joy. Suddenly Lord John entered the apartment ; he derided us when he found us upon our knees, and after he had ordered Hanna to leave the room he told me that, as in a few weeks I would be of age, I must then choose one of two things—either to marry him, or to depart for a convent in France. Either proposition made me shudder. I am still so young, and I do not love my guardian. If I could love him and he were a person like you,” she continued, in artless and unconscious simplicity, “ I could see no objection to it ; but, as it is, I cannot endure the thought of it. And I dread a convent hardly less. Now you know it all. But let us say no more about it. I trust myself wholly to Jesus and his keeping ; he will provide for me. Tell me now how you are prospering with your preaching.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CRAZED FUGITIVE.

WALTER HARMSSEN was much impressed with what Jacoba had communicated to him, and, greatly as he would have liked to return to the subject, he well understood that it was better not to speak of it just now. He complied, therefore, with her wish, and told her that, in spite of much opposition, the Lord had nevertheless blessed his simple addresses to the people, and that the preaching services which he had lately begun to hold on the peasant Dykerts's farm had drawn together great numbers. At this good news the maiden clapped her hands for joy. Meanwhile, they had reached the end of the lane, and, entering a cross-road, they soon came to the house of the forester.

The good wife was at home, surrounded by her children. The Lady Jacoba had a kind word for each of them, and, taking the babe upon her arm, she danced and romped about the room with it. The child laughed and crowed in great glee, not at all disconcerted by this intimate contact with no less a personage than the heiress of Vlooswyk.

Walter had engaged the woman in conversation, and was urging her to maintain courageously the struggle which she too had to brave.

"My dear husband is not what I should call *opposed* to my religious convictions, Mr. Walter," she said; "he is, rather, indifferent. He always says that it is better for me not to meddle with such things—that they should be left to the clergy."

"And does he think that the clergy can work out his salvation?" asked Walter.

"That is what I put to him myself, but he answered, 'I do what they tell me, and what more can I do?' Then I pointed out to him the many untruths which they maintain; I told him that none could be saved by one's own merits, neither by Church nor priest, self-chastisement nor fasting. But when I begin to speak thus, he leaves the house or calls me a fanatic."

"I sympathize with you in this your trial," said Walter; "but do not lose courage on that account: faith and love will conquer in the end. Pray fervently to the Lord; he is faithful, and will hear you for Jesus' sake."

At this instant one of the children, who stood by the window, uttered a loud scream. All looked in that direction, wondering what ailed the child, when in front of the window was seen the tall form of a woman whose disheveled hair and features distorted by fatigue and fear might well frighten a child.

Before the inmates of room had time to indulge in any conjectures regarding her, she opened the door and entered.

It was the crazed fugitive from the camp of the Anabaptists, who had hastened over hill and dale, and had found her way thus far. She walked to the centre of the room, and there stood staring so wildly that the children fled in terror to their mother or hid themselves behind Jacoba. Walter at once suspected that she was demented. He spoke to her gently, but the woman took no notice of him. Her eyes were fixed upon Jacoba, and her wildness seemed suddenly to desert her. For whom was intended the smile which now lighted up her countenance? Was she smiling to the babe which the heiress was clasping to her bosom, or was that friendly recognition meant for Jacoba herself? The longer her eyes rested upon Jacoba, the brighter grew the light that illumined the stranger's features. She brushed away the straggling locks, and seemed to reflect. A few incoherent words fell from her lips, but she soon relapsed into a deep reverie.

Walter made another attempt to speak to the woman, and laid his hand softly upon her shoulder, but she gave no heed to his words. Shaking off his touch, she laid her finger upon her lips, as if calling for silence, and, spreading out her arms, she made a movement toward the heiress of Vlooswyk.

Jacoba hastily drew back, for, although her heart

overflowed with compassion for the poor unfortunate, she was a little in fear of her also. Walter, likewise, apprehending that the crazed woman might do more harm than she intended, placed himself between her and the maiden. This seemed to grieve the woman; her eyes everywhere sought Jacoba, and, as Walter's body intercepted the view of her, she cast herself upon the floor in a crouching position and began to utter a sound resembling the low crying of a child.

"Good woman," said Walter, "whence do you come? Tell us, and we shall take you home."

But the woman made no reply; her crying, on the contrary, grew louder.

"You surely do not belong in this neighborhood, poor woman! Do you know that you are at the house of Lord John van Vlooswyk's forester?"

On hearing the nobleman's name the woman raised her head and stammered, "Vlooswyk!" and, with an evidently painful effort to gather her scattered thoughts, she added softly, "Jacoba!"

Our friends looked at each other in astonishment at hearing her speak Jacoba's name. A strange feeling seized on the young gentlewoman's heart.

"Jacoba, Jacoba! Vlooswyk!" the crazed woman went on, muttering to herself, and, covering her face with her hands, she began to weep aloud.

The heiress of Vlooswyk placed the child, which she had continued to hold, upon a chair, and was

approaching the demented creature to comfort her, when loud voices were heard outside the house. The next moment Walter caught sight of Gysbert Barends and Cornelis Koen, and the latter was heard to call out,

“Here she is! Here she is!”

The door was violently thrown open, and the two Anabaptists entered the room. They seemed to be surprised, however, for, instead of at once going up to the crazed woman, they drew back a step or two, while Koen exclaimed,

“How does *he* come to be here?”

“What do you wish, men?” inquired Walter, placing himself between the woman and her pursuers.

The men exchanged a few whispered words, and then Koen replied,

“We are come to convey this woman back to her home. You see, she is out of her mind and has run away.”

“And where does she live?”

“Wherever we go,” answered Koen, insolently. “The whole earth is our possession.”

“Who, then, are you?” asked Walter, who remembered the encounter of the day before.

“We are the true people of Zion, who trouble ourselves about no one and follow our own way.”

“You belong, then, to the Anabaptists?”

“That is the nickname which the world bestows upon us. We are Christians who practice the cus-

tom of the apostolic Church : 'they had all things common.' This woman is a member of our society ; she has escaped from our keeping ; and now, by command of our master, we are here to take her back."

"But you see, men, that she is not in a condition just now to accompany you to the place where your people are stopping. Let her rest a few hours. In the mean time the forester will return home, and you can consult with him about getting her back."

"Why this delay?" objected Koen. "What do we care about your forester? We came here and found this woman. I tell you she belongs to us;" and, pushing Walter aside, he called Gysbert Barends, who came forward, and each seized the woman by an arm.

Jacoba by a look besought Walter not to suffer the poor creature to be taken away ; but it appeared that the woman did not need Walter's assistance, for no sooner did she feel the touch of Koen's hand upon her shoulder than she suddenly sprang to her feet, threw Koen against Barends and took refuge behind Jacoba.

"Come on, you wretched fool!" exclaimed Koen, rubbing his forehead, which had come into no gentle contact with Barends's person. "Come on! I am getting tired of this dilly-dallying." He attempted to push Walter aside, but Jacoba stepped between him and the poor woman.

The room presented a scene of great confusion, Walter, Jacoba and the forester's wife doing their utmost to shield the poor creature who had fled to them for refuge, the crazed fugitive crying and shrieking alternately, the children screaming in terror, and the two Anabaptists cursing and struggling. Walter plead with them to allow her at least some rest, but the pursuers would not listen to this, and began to threaten more violent measures.

"Then I tell you," said Walter, "that I will not suffer you take her away."

"And do you think that you can prevent us, you milksop?" cried Koen, contemptuously.

"With God's help, yes," the young man replied, and struck down the hand which Koen had again laid upon the woman.

"Shall we stand this, Barends?" cried Koen, enraged.—"You have insulted me, puppy, and I shall not leave you unpunished;" and, drawing his sword, he pressed upon Walter.

Jacob and the forester's wife, seeing Walter's danger, sprang upon his assailant and held his hand. Barends now threw himself upon Walter, and the latter felt that he was no match for the rough customer he was encountering. There can be no doubt that the women and he must have been overpowered had not assistance speedily arrived. The noise of the scuffle, as well as the shrieks and screams of the women and children, had attracted the attention of

some passers-by. The door was thrown open, and the ensign, with Arminius and Thomas Brully, entered the room.

The Anabaptists, with mingled disappointment and rage, saw that they could not contend with the odds now against them. They flung themselves through the open door, upsetting Brully in their flight, and sped away to the woods. The ensign, with Walter and Arminius, made a brief attempt to overtake them, but soon returned.

Meanwhile, the demented woman had disappeared. In spite of the friendly remonstrances of the forester's wife and Jacoba, she had broken from them in a frenzy; and when the men returned, she was nowhere to be found.

Walter expressed his delight at this timely meeting with his friends, and after taking leave of Jacoba, who wished to remain a while longer with the forester's wife, he left the house in their company.

On their way Dirk Gapertz informed Walter that, according to appointment, he and Arminius had taken an early-morning walk; that about an hour previously they had stopped at his grandfather's house, and had learned from Thomas Brully that an important message had come for Walter, whereupon they had all together taken the road to Vlooswyk, surmising that he had gone thither.

"And what is the message?" inquired Walter.

"A request from Head-Sheriff Goert van Reede that you meet him at the town-hall to-morrow morning at ten o'clock," replied Thomas Brully.

Walter looked at Dirk Gapertz. The latter smiled, and, taking him aside, said,

"You think that my arrival has something to do with this invitation of Mr. Goert van Reede. Perhaps it has ; at least, we are on the track of a great crime, the origin of which is traced to Vlooswyk. But, although I know that you frequent that neighborhood, I hardly think you will be charged with this outrage."

"When did you see Mr. Goert van Reede?"

"Last night. I gave him my letters and placed myself wholly at his disposal, but, since His Worship must first consult the magistracy, I was free to do with my time this morning what I pleased. It may be that I can devote the whole day to you ; I greatly rejoice in this, for our conversation yesterday has made me long to see and hear more of you."

Walter in his turn expressed his satisfaction at the opportunity of spending many hours with the ensign. They now hastened on to overtake Arminius and Brully, who were engaged in an absorbing conversation about their studies.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT THE TOWN-HALL.

IN the chamber where the burgomaster and other magistrates of the city of Utrecht were accustomed to assemble for business was seated Mr. Goert van Reede, head-sheriff of the city ; on the table before him lay various papers and letters which were awaiting his perusal or signature. Although it was early in the day, it was nevertheless evident that he felt somewhat weary ; at least, he pushed the papers aside, fell back into his arm-chair and leaned his head upon his hand. And well might he be weary, for the condition of the times brought him much perplexity. He had held the office of head-sheriff since the year 1555, and during that time many a dark cloud had passed over his native city. Utrecht had frequently been made to suffer during the contentions with tyranny and the Inquisition of those earlier years. Much violence had been committed by the Spanish garri-sons at various times sent to hold and punish the city. It was to compel Utrecht to accept the imposition of the ten-penny tax that the troops had

been removed from the city of Briel, and that it had been left open to the successful attack of the Water-Beggars on April 1, 1572.

In those days, when political and religious principles were so closely united, a thoughtful patriot was usually led to adopt the Reformed faith. The head-sheriff had cordially accepted the doctrines of Protestantism, but he was far from being intolerant of the views of others who clung to the old Romish faith or differed from him in the less essential particulars of the Reformed tenets; he was, therefore, opposed to the desires of those who deemed that liberty of conscience was to be accorded only to the Reformed. These men caused him much trouble by their extravagant and intolerant claims. He could not endure the thought of giving greater privileges to one party or sect than to another. It was his aim, indeed, to let the doctrines of the Reformation have the widest circulation, so that the people might hear the truth and have an opportunity to accept or reject it, and he was willing to do much to counteract priestcraft and efforts to keep the people in ignorance and superstition; but he would neither oppress Romanists who chose to remain such nor advance one party of the Protestants at the expense of another. It pained the worthy man greatly that on account of these differences of sentiment new and difficult complications were continually arising, for he feared that these

might lead to civic disturbances, to conflicts of citizens against citizens—more to be dreaded than the oppression of the Spaniards. The plan agreed upon by Lord John van Vlooswyk and the priests of St. Servatius was also taking effect. The Romish populace were being stirred up against the authorities, and were ready at a signal to rise up in arms, and the head-sheriff was well aware of that fact.

These things were amply sufficient to provide the head-sheriff with food for anxious reflection at the moment that we see him sitting with bowed head before his table. But, besides, the youthful ensign had brought a message from the director of the union, Count John of Nassau, involving a matter of so serious and delicate a nature that its consideration had robbed him of his night's rest. After consulting with the magistrates at a meeting held late at night, it had seemed advisable to have an oral conference with the several preachers, orthodox as well as liberal, to induce them to suppress their mutual bitterness of expression and to admonish them to more unity and co-operation; as regarded the Romanists, means would be employed to silence their eloquent instigator, William van der Eyke. Immediately after reading Count John's letter the high-sheriff had commissioned several of his officials to inquire into the important affair mentioned therein, and had sent a messenger to Amersfoort to

obtain further instructions. He was now awaiting the results of these preliminary measures.

Mr. Goert van Reede had sat thus plunged in thought for some time when the door opened and a servant announced that the preacher Nicholas Sopingius had arrived. The head-sheriff arose to receive him when he entered the chamber.

The Rev. Nicholas Sopingius was tall of person, thin and of a pleasant countenance. In accordance with the custom of those days, he wore a headdress that might be described as a sort of cap without a visor, but with a stiff velvet border, over which drooped on one side the soft and yielding crown, which was flat and low. When, in greeting the sheriff, he removed this covering, he disclosed a lofty forehead and hair carelessly arranged, while a heavy moustache and a dark beard covered the lips and chin. His neck was made rather uncomfortable by his broad-pleated collar. His dress was in keeping with the dignity and sobriety of his sacred office. A close-fitting garment of dark-brown cloth reached to the waist, and terminated in loose folds; over this hung a wide cloak. Black-velvet breeches secured at the knees with silver clasps, dark-blue stockings and a pair of strong shoes completed his attire.

"I am rejoiced to see you, reverend sir," said Mr. Van Reede. "I trust that the acceptance of my invitation caused you no inconvenience?"

“Not at all, Sir Sheriff,” replied Sopingius. “The Lord saith in his word, ‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake;’ and again, ‘Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.’”

“Very true, very true, reverend sir; yet your pressing labors might have prevented your coming. But I account myself fortunate that this was not the case, and I will immediately inform you what induced me to ask your presence here.”

“I am wholly at your service, Your Honor,” said Sopingius.

The two men now seated themselves at the table, and Mr. Goert van Reede, taking a paper in his hands and unfolding it, began:

“With what sentiments do you and your colleague, the Rev. Mr. Helmichius, regard the work of the minister of the St. Jacob’s church?”*

“Do you mean Mr. Hubert Duifhuis?” inquired Sopingius.†

* This church was at that time used for services by both the Romanists and the Protestants.

† This Hubert Duifhuis was formerly a priest connected with this same St. Jacob’s church. Having been suspected of adherence to the Reformation, he was compelled to flee the country. In the year 1578 he returned and openly avowed his change of views, but he differed widely from the orthodox Reformed in many particulars. He would never consent to preach on the catechism, even at that early date obligatory upon the preachers of the Reformed Church. “The Holy

The countenance of Sopingius assumed a serious expression much akin to dislike. This was not unobserved by the official, who added,

“If I am correct in my surmises, I fear that the good understanding which I should so gladly see subsisting between men who preach a gospel of peace has rather diminished than increased.”

“I believe, however, with your permission, Sir Sheriff,” remarked the clergyman, “that you should not number Mr. Duifhuis among those who preach a sound gospel.”

“No?” inquired Mr. Van Reede, as if he learned this for the first time, intending to draw out the clergyman.

“No, indeed!” replied Sopingius, earnestly. “A man who, contrary to God’s word, acknowledges no elders, nor deacons, nor consistory; a man who rejects church discipline and excommunication; a man who will not teach or preach on the catechism;* a man from whose lips is never heard a

Scripture,” he said, “is my catechism.” He rejected predestination, original sin and imputed righteousness, maintaining that men should cause their “inner virtues” to appear. Yet he was much in favor with the magistracy.”

* It is still a requirement in the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America—the lineal descendant of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands—that the pastor of a church preach on a division (called “Lord’s Day”) of the Heidelberg Catechism about once a month, so as to complete the fifty-two Lord’s days within every four years.—TRANSLATOR.

word concerning the saving truths and high mysteries of election and original sin,—such a man we must indeed, compelled by the authorities, recognize as a colleague in the ministerial office, but, unless the Lord converts him, we must designate him as a free-thinker or liberal, and cannot call him one of us.”

“I believe, reverend sir, that your zeal carries you a little too far and makes your judgment one-sided. I have several times heard Mr. Duifhuis preach, and was much edified by his discourses.”

The head-sheriff had the power to compel Sopin-gius not to denounce his colleague, but this course was not advisable, as the preacher was a zealous laborer in spreading the knowledge of the pure gospel in the midst of the prevailing Romish superstitions, and as such stood high in favor with Count John of Nassau. Besides, he hoped to effect by gentleness and reason what force would certainly fail to accomplish. He therefore continued:

“I doubt, worthy sir, whether, upon the ground of Christian love and forbearance, you have a right to treat Mr. Duifhuis as you do. This, at all events, is certain: your colleague preaches Christ, and, although he may not do so in just the way you would wish, I believe you could sooner persuade him to your own mode of thinking by showing him brotherly love and fellowship than by denouncing him. I have lately learned that you, in

the name of your consistory, have brought accusation against him before the churches of Amsterdam, Delft, Dordrecht, Schniedam and others, to the effect that he was a person 'who hindered the dawning of the light of truth,' calling him 'an occasion and a defender of indecency and of godless opinions, a despiser of Christian order and discipline.'* This is wrong, Mr. Sopingius, and must not be repeated. Did not Paul rejoice that in every way Christ was preached? It was he, too, who wrote that 'charity suffereth long, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth in the truth, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' Truly, reverend sir, I assure you that the authorities observe with deep grief these contentions, and wish nothing more fervently than that unitedly and in love you labor together. By this you will greatly advance the interests of the Church, whilst, on the other hand, continuing as you have done hitherto, you will give the Romanists occasion to profit by your dissensions. I charge you, therefore, solemnly, to endeavor to practice a more fraternal intercourse with Mr. Duifhuis, and request you to convey this my desire to your colleague Mr. Helmichius. I wish now to discuss some other matters with you. The city authorities have received a writing from your consistory, embracing a petition that the entire St. Nicholas church—of which now you use a part

* These words are historical, found in archives of the Church relating to these times.

—and the Minderbrethren church be placed at their disposal.”

“I deem this request a very reasonable one, Sir Sheriff, for our audiences are growing far beyond the accommodations now furnished them.”

“I am aware of it,” replied Mr. Van Reede, “but hitherto we have not been able to see our way clear to grant the request, for the union accords freedom of worship to every denomination of Christians. But I am of the opinion that we shall unexpectedly be given a good opportunity for extending the privileges of the Reformed. The Romanists are becoming very restless, and are being instigated by their preachers and other ecclesiastics to undertake to assert themselves here as their brethren in the faith did at Amersfoort. I fear I shall have to request their preachers to remove themselves to a distance, and in that case I shall be in a condition to comply with the petition of the consistory.”

“We shall be very grateful, Sir Sheriff; our Church would then attain still greater prosperity: the Romanists hinder us greatly. We shall put our confidence in God, however, and pray for our lawful authorities that they may be blessed in the support of the good cause.”

“I have another matter, reverend sir,” remarked the head-sheriff, taking a folded document from the table and hastily opening it and running his eyes over its contents.

"Be pleased to let me know what it is, Your Worship," said Sopingius.

"I will put it to you in the form of a request," observed Mr. Van Reede, taking up another paper and noting down a few words. "Have the kindness to recall to your mind an occurrence that took place fourteen years ago."

"'Fourteen years ago'?" asked Sopingius, in surprise, endeavoring to collect his thoughts. "I really cannot recall anything that would have made such a lasting impression. Be so good, therefore, as to aid me with a hint or two."

Mr. Goert van Reede again consulted the paper in his hand, and said,

"Do you not remember that you were at that time in Gelderland, returning from a journey on foot to Munster?"

"Yes, I remember that very well; but to what circumstance of that journey have you reference?"

"You were, as I am informed, on a certain day in the vicinity of Doetichem, on the road to Doesburg, when you met a young woman with a child in her arms. Do you recollect that?"

"Yes, very well indeed," answered Sopingius, awaking as from a dream.

"Be so kind, then, as to tell me all about it; for it has relation to a very serious affair. How did this woman look?"

"She seemed very youthful, and, to judge from

her apparel, she must have belonged to a high station, if not to the nobility itself. I found her sitting under a tree. The child in her arms was crying vehemently, but, instead of quieting it, she shook it somewhat roughly. I asked her where she lived and why she did not soothe the child, but she uttered only incoherent words; so that I at once concluded that she was out of her mind."

"And do you not recollect any of these words?"

"Yes, but I should most certainly have forgotten them had I not been reminded of them a few years afterward; for when I came to this city, I heard of Castle Vlooswyk, and it at once occurred to me that this woman several times repeated that name."

"Did she speak of nothing else?"

"Yes, of many other things, but so incoherently that I could make no sense of them, and have forgotten them. I pitied her much, and especially the child, which continued to cry. I asked her to arise and accompany me, hoping to find proper entertainment for her in a village in the neighborhood, but she was not to be moved to this. Suddenly there were heard voices of men approaching us. These sounds seemed to startle her, for she sprang up, and, in spite of my efforts to detain her, she tore herself from my grasp and escaped with her child. I followed her with my eyes, and saw her surrounded by men, who forced the child from her and conducted her into the woods."

"And did you see nothing more of them?"

"Not that day. I lost myself in fruitless surmises, but, as they came to nothing definite, I would very likely have dismissed the whole circumstance from my mind if I had not been reminded of it two days afterward."

"Relate with especial care and particularity what you then saw," said Mr. Goert van Reede, who had taken notes while Mr. Sopingius was speaking.

"I was then," he continued, "in the neighborhood of a certain hamlet, and had taken refuge from the heat, which was somewhat oppressive, under the shadow of some birch trees, when I saw a person—evidently a nobleman—coming on horseback. A few moments later I perceived that he was approached by several men. Two of them I at once recognized as of those who had overtaken the woman, forced the child from her and led her away. After the nobleman had conversed with one of these men for a length of time they gave the child to him, whereupon he rode away at full speed."

Mr. Goert van Reede carefully noted down all this, and then, turning again to the worthy Sopingius, he inquired,

"Have you ever met this woman since?"

"No, Your Honor."

"Nor the nobleman?"

"Nor him—at least, not that I remember."

"But would you recognize him if you should meet him again?"

"I have no doubt I should, for, although many years have passed since that day, his features are still vividly before my mind."

"I tell you in confidence, reverend sir," observed the head-sheriff, with deep seriousness, "that we are on the track of a great crime, and that you may be of vast service to us in bringing the perpetrator to justice. May I ask you, therefore, to come here again day after to-morrow at about this same hour? You may possibly then meet the person who rode away with the child."

"That nobleman?"

"The same. But it will not be necessary to tell you that you are not to let him notice your recognition of him."

"Not in the least, Sir Sheriff. I shall be happy to be of any service to the authorities. The crime, if any is found to exist, must be punished. The Lord will see to that, for nothing is hid from his sight."

Mr. Goert van Reede now thanked the clergyman, who, comprehending that the official had no further business with him, arose. The sheriff pressed his visitor's hand in parting, and, conducting him to the door of the chamber, took cordial leave of him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COUNTERPLOTS.

RETURNING to his chair, Mr. Goert van Reede pulled a bell-cord suspended over the table. A servant entered the chamber.

"Has the young man arrived whom I told you to summon?"

"Yes, Your Honor; he has been waiting nearly half an hour in the reception-room."

"Ask him to come up at once," said the head-sheriff.

The servant disappeared, and a few moments later Walter Harmsen entered the apartment. Walter politely greeted the official, who returned the greeting and offered him a chair.

"May I ask your name?" began Mr. Goert Van Reede, fixing a scrutinizing glance upon Walter.

"Walter Harmsen."

"Your birthplace?"

"Haarlem."

"Your father?"

"Deceased, Your Honor."

"What was his occupation?"

"Preacher of the gospel."

"To which congregation?"

"To every creature, Your Honor," replied Walter, modestly.

"A rather extensive congregation, that, truly," observed Mr. Van Reede, with a smile.

"Very true, Sir Sheriff; but if this larger congregation were better remembered, there would be more preaching of the gospel, for now one place is, so to speak, overloaded with preachers, and another suffers from the lack of them."

"Your observation is not without some force, but this fault will gradually be remedied. Our Church is still in its infancy; it is a tender plant which will not yet bear much transplanting. May I ask you in what official relation you stand to the Church?"

"In none whatever, Your Honor."

"In no relation at all?" asked Mr. Van Reede, surprised. "Do you, then, disapprove of her confessions?"

"By no means, Sir Sheriff, but my father was a traveling evangelist, and I am fain to walk in his footsteps."

"Well, it is a good son that would be like a good father," said Mr. Goert, smiling approvingly and taking up some papers. Having looked them over, he inquired, "Are you acquainted with a certain Ensign Gapertz of the States' army?"

"Yes, Your Honor. He was a friend of my boyhood-days, and, although many years passed without our seeing each other, our friendship is of a kind that cannot easily be dissolved."

"Do you know the nature of his errand here?"

This question, though politely spoken, was accompanied by a searching look which caused Walter no little embarrassment. If he should reveal what Dirk Gapertz had told him, he might be disclosing something which the latter had related under the seal of confidence. He reflected a moment, and then said,

"I know that he is here by command of the director of the union, and surmise, accordingly, that he bears a message relating to its affairs."

"Ah!" dryly observed Mr. Van Reede, and stroked his beard meditatively, while he contemplated the youth some time in silence and then asked, "Do you know the lord of Vlooswyk?"

"No, Your Honor; I have never exchanged words with him."

"I have, however, been informed that you frequent the vicinity of the castle. What draws you there?"

Fortunately for Walter, Mr. Van Reede had again turned his eyes upon a document in his hands, and before he lifted them the blush that had suffused the young man's countenance had vanished. He replied quietly:

"I go there from time to time to visit the country-people of that neighborhood."

"Indeed!" remarked the official. "And are you not acquainted with any of the inmates of the castle?"

"With only one of them."

"And this is—"

"The ward of Lord John van Vlooswyk."

"What is her name?"

"Jacoba," replied Walter, not without some confusion.

Mr. Van Reede was again consulting his papers.

"Exactly! exactly!" he muttered to himself.

"It must be she." Making a note or two, he turned to Walter and inquired,

"Did you never speak to her about her parents?"

"About her parents'?" asked Walter, astonished.

"I thought she was an orphan."

"Perhaps she is," observed Mr. Van Reede, "yet she might have mentioned whether she felt the loss of her parents, and especially that of her mother. Did she never do so?"

"I cannot recollect that she did."

"No?" said the sheriff, examining a paper which contained a report of what his emissaries had seen and heard at Vlooswyk the day before. "Did you not yesterday encounter a crazed woman at the house of the forester of Vlooswyk?"

The question struck Walter like a sudden revela-

tion. Putting these questions together, he began to comprehend that the demented woman might stand in some relation to Jacoba's past history. He replied in the affirmative.

"Will you be so kind as to relate to me the particulars of the encounter?"

Walter readily complied, and told all he knew.

"And do you know who were those men who pursued this woman?"

Walter replied that he did not know where they made their abode, but that he recognized them as the same who had assaulted the ensign Gapertz in the Vrede inn, and that they were Anabaptists.

Mr. Van Reede busily plied his pen to add to his already voluminous notes and was about to put another question to Walter, when a somewhat violent knocking was heard upon the door of the chamber. The head-sheriff called, "Come in!" when, ushered by the servant, the young ensign made his appearance, to the great surprise of both inmates of the room.

Dirk Gapertz saluted the official politely and cordially pressed his friend Walter's hand. After taking due leave, the latter left the chamber.

"Pardon me, Sir Sheriff," said the ensign, "for taking the liberty of disturbing you in your conference with my friend, but I have been waiting quite a while, and the affairs that brought me here ask speed."

“And what are they?” inquired Mr. Goert van Reede, with the utmost calmness.

“First of all,” eagerly continued the youthful officer, “I have received information that matters have come to an open conflict at Amersfoort. I fear the scenes of the image-breakings of 1566 will be repeated. I came here to consult you about this.”

“But, my dear ensign,” said Mr. Van Reede, “I should think that the troops under Count John of Nassau are fully able to contend with the rioters, and will need no aid from us.”

“I do not mean that, Your Honor, but I deem it of the last importance to take prompt measures here in this city; riots are infectious, and spread often from place to place. I do not think I go beyond my instructions if I urge it upon you to call the militia under arms as speedily as possible, to prevent our being surprised by a sudden attack. I urge it the more since I have learned that Lord John van Vlooswyk—”

“‘Lord John van Vlooswyk’?” observed Mr. Van Reede. “What has he to do with this affair?”

“He was recently at Amerfoort, and is known to have stirred up the people through the clergy. But I know also for a certainty that he had a conference here with the two priests of the convent of Our Lady and Dr. William van der Eyke with a view to effecting an uprising in this city.”

"I admire your ingenuity in discovering these facts," remarked the head-sheriff. "Truly, if all Count John of Nassau's officers are as quickwitted as you, I congratulate the union. I must inform you, however, that I had already gained information regarding these very matters, and I believe the measures I have taken will meet with your approval. Here, at least, is evidence that I have not been idle this morning, but have watched over the interests of the citizens." He handed the ensign a paper summoning the officers of the militia to a conference that very day. "I have enjoined the commander-in-chief of the militia to consult with you about all the arrangements, and I shall expect you to report to me the condition of affairs at least twice a day. I would suggest that the road to Amersfoort have the most of your care, since we may expect our worst danger from that direction."

"With your permission, Sir Sheriff," replied the ensign, "I do not think we need to look for our chief danger on that side; it is more likely that the city is threatened by an attack from a band of Anabaptists who have been bribed to take part in this riot."

"I have had them in mind also," remarked Mr. Van Reede, "and I have given orders that whoever, of their number, armed or unarmed, are seen about or in the city shall at once be imprisoned. But

you had another matter concerning which you desired to speak, said you not?"

"Yes, Your Honor; it has reference to the crime of which we are on the track. I have proofs at command that Lord Gerard van Vlooswyk has not been put to death, as we suspected, but that he is alive, although at the mercy of his jailers, who may despatch him at any moment."

"And where is he kept?"

"In the convent of Our Lady. Yesterday I was visiting the library of the archbishop; I met a venerable old man there, the librarian, Father Boniface. He showed me a number of remarkable manuscripts and interesting books, and gradually we were led into earnest conversation; I found that he was not far from the truth as we hold it. Thus talking, I seemed to have commended myself to his confidence; for when we happened to speak of Lord John van Vlooswyk, he told me something that made my hair stand on end."

Mr. Goert van Reede listened with intense interest to the recital by the ensign of all that he had heard from Father Boniface's lips, and which our readers already know.

"The point now is," said the ensign, eagerly, "to penetrate to the prisoner's cell and deliver him from the hands of his tormentors."

"Exactly," said Mr. Van Reede. "But we have need of great caution in this business. Lord John

van Vlooswyk is a powerful noble, and the priests are shrewd; the least indiscretion will spoil the whole affair." The head-sheriff remained for some time in deep thought, and finally said, "I must carefully consider this affair, and I request you to return hither this afternoon to receive instructions regarding a plan which I think we shall have to follow. We shall need to use wisdom in out-doing these skillful plotters."

"I shall return," said the ensign. "Till then farewell, Sir Sheriff;" and, bowing politely, the ensign departed.

A few minutes later Mr. Van Reede pulled the bell-cord; and when the servant appeared, he handed him a paper, saying:

"Take this immediately to the commandant of the militia."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FRIGHTENED PRIEST.

WHILE Mr. Goert van Reede was maturing his plans and taking well-considered measures, Ensign Dirk Gapertz watched the road to Amersfoort, whose ecclesiastics were making common cause with those of Utrecht in order to make one supreme effort to regain the lost cause, and to this end were conspiring with Lord John van Vlooswyk and the Anabaptists. Walter Harmsen was wending his steps to the house of Farmer Dykerts to preach the gospel to an audience that was to meet upon one of his fields, and Father Boniface was seated in the convent library.

The weather was beautiful, and, although the cathedral-clock had sounded forth five strokes, the air was almost as warm and balmy as if it were still noon. The pious Father was busy, with Joris Ruikmans's help, gathering parchments together, as he contemplated some changes in the arrangement of the books. They had been thus engaged for some hours, and the continued heat compelled them to seek a little rest. The aged Boniface seated him-

self upon a bench, and, resting his head upon his hands, he gave himself up to silent meditation. He took no notice of the constant chattering of the dwarf, who walked restlessly to and fro and vainly tried every means to engage him in conversation. This caused Joris much chagrin. Finally he got up on a small bench, directly in front of the monk, raising himself thus to a level with his face, and stood there, as much as to say, "I remain here till you speak to me."

"I think we shall have a thunder-storm after this warm weather," he began, once more.

No answer.

"I should not be surprised if a storm breaks out both over and within the city, for it is so very still everywhere. I should not wonder if a pretty bad shower would blow over this way from Amersfoort. The heretics are getting very much excited, although I doubt not but our own clergy are anything but easy to endure. And, as to Lord John van Vlooswyk, he is brewing some mischief, I warrant; but he will have me to deal with yet, as true as my name is Joris Ruikmans. What do you say to that, Father?"

Father Boniface made no reply.

Now, any one else would have been considerate enough to leave the old man to his own thoughts and let him rest from his weariness, but Joris Ruikmans seemed born to torment people. He

was too conceited to suppose it possible that any one could have no delight in his gossip, and so he kept on talking. He chose a subject of conversation which he felt assured would arouse the worthy Father's attention.

"I have been on the watch how to obtain access to the prisoner, and, although I have not succeeded in this, I have now the means of getting to him. Last night, after vespers, I hid myself in a niche, and saw Priest Waenders pass by me with a flask of water and some bread. When he had gone a few paces, I followed him as noiselessly as I could as far as the iron door, which he locked behind him; so that I could go no farther. I listened, but I was too far away to hear what he said to the prisoner, and, fearing he would soon return, I retreated and hid myself again within the niche. I saw now that the priest was in possession of the keys, and that all I had to do was to get these from him; and it was not long before I had hit upon a plan. A happy thought occurred to me—"

"And what was that?" interrupted Father Boniface, lifting his head.

The dwarf was not a little rejoiced to perceive that he had finally succeeded in engaging the silent monk in conversation. He continued:

"One who is not strong must be sly. I have long held a grudge against that conceited priest, and I mean to get even with him."

"That is wrong. A revengeful spirit indicates an evil heart."

"That may be," observed Joris; "but I got what I wanted, at any rate. For look," he continued, drawing a bunch of keys from the pocket of his breeches; "here they are. Only let it get dark to-night; and when all is quiet, I know who will go with me to the prisoner's cell."

"Tell me how you managed to secure those keys?" inquired the Father, astonished and delighted.

"That I will do," said the dwarf, piling a few books upon the bench and seating himself on the top. "You know that Mr. Waenders's cell is next to the oratory; you know, also, that in accordance with some vow he comes to this oratory every night just before retiring and tells the beads of two rosaries, a prayer for each bead, before the image of St. Servatius. Yesterday morning I happened to be in this oratory, and saw a mechanic—evidently a stone-cutter—taking the image from its pedestal in order to repair some little injury. Accidentally the image fell, and its left arm was broken. The stone-cutter was in great terror, and besought me to say nothing of it and he would be sure to replace it, all repaired, before evening. I promised to keep the accident a secret, and the man left with the image. He did not bring it back, however, before evening; perhaps he could not get it done."

"I cannot imagine," interrupted Father Boniface,

with some impatience, "why you trouble me with this idle gossip. What do I care about the breaking of this image or its restoration? What has that to do with the keys?"

"But I must tell you all that led me to my exploit," observed Joris, a little offended. "It was just this neglect of the stone-cutter which enabled me to carry out my plan."

"How so?" inquired the Father, his curiosity once more aroused.

"Well, while I was hiding there in the niche, trying to think of some way to secure the keys, St. Servatius occurred to me. The idea struck me at once: I might as well personate St. Servatius for an hour or so; then I would save the stone-cutter some trouble, and perhaps accomplish what I wished. So thought, so done. I quickly left my hiding-place and went to my bedroom to fetch a sheet; for, you remember, St. Servatius is represented covered with a white garment. I then betook myself stealthily to the oratory, climbing from the kneeling-bench upon the holy-water font, and from that I succeeded in reaching the vacant pedestal of the saint. I wrapped the sheet carefully about me and, as nearly as possible assuming St. Servatius's attitude, waited the coming of his devout priest. I was not very much afraid of detection, for the feeble blaze of the single wax candle he generally lights would scarcely enable the near-sighted priest to dis-

tinguish the true from the false saint. I soon heard footsteps, and a few moments after the priest entered the room—as I thought, somewhat disturbed in his manner—and carefully bolted the door. His face was very pale, and I saw by the feeble light of the candle that on the way to the oratory he must have encountered something which had startled, and even frightened, him. This suited me exactly, for his nerves would thus be in the right condition to get him still more badly frightened.”

“The evil-doer trembles always, even at the least unwonted noise, and usually when there is the least danger,” observed Boniface.

“No doubt,” assented Joris. “But let me go on. To my joy, I saw him lay a bunch of keys upon a little table near the door, and, taking his rosary, he began to pace up and down the room, muttering something under his breath. He then approached the kneeling-bench, sprinkled himself with holy water and kneeled devoutly, bending his head low. I had held my breath up to this moment, but now I drew a deep sigh. ‘What is that?’ said the priest, turning his head. Of course I said nothing, but fetched another deep sigh, followed by a third and a fourth. The terror of the priest increased with every sigh I drew, and I plainly saw how gladly he would have rushed from the apartment were it not that he seemed to dread a greater danger without. I gloried in his plight, for he had

more than deserved it for all his insulting remarks about my small stature. I thought to myself, 'What a *great* fright does *little* Joris give you now!'

"Pretty soon I ventured upon another expedient. Changing my voice to make it sound as if it came from the floor, I spoke the priest's name. His terror was getting beyond all bounds. He left the kneeling-bench and shrunk into a corner. Perceiving that my voice had not betrayed me, I called his name again, somewhat louder, and he put his fingers into his ears. Now I judged that the time for the crisis had come. By another change of voice I made him involuntarily look up, when I gently waved my sheet back and forth. I then with an awful voice pronounced his doom; and when I saw that he trembled in every limb, I suddenly sprang from my pedestal. He uttered one fearful yell, and then fell prostrate upon the floor. I quickly extinguished the candle, seized the keys, unbolted the door and hastened to my room."

"And what has happened since?" inquired Boniface, with eager interest.

"What happened further during that night I do not know, but this morning the news is going the rounds that the worthy Mr. Waenders was found lying in a swoon in the oratory, and is even now scarcely able to utter a word. He was paralyzed with fright."

"That comes from your wicked trick," said Father Boniface. "Who knows but it may have a fatal result?"

"Oh, I do not think the consequences will be so serious. What he is suffering now he has richly deserved."

"Leave it to God to render him his deserts."

"I am perfectly willing to do that," remarked the imperturbable Joris, "as long as I have given him something by way of foretaste. He will doubtless recover soon, for his worthy colleague is forcing one drug after another down his throat. I do not think that my trick—fortunately for me—will be discovered: early this morning the stone-cutter must have restored the image to its place, for I found it upon its pedestal, safe and sound, when I looked into the oratory. So, then, if Mr. Waenders is capable of relating anything of his experience, very likely it will be thought that a miracle has happened or that the worthy man fell asleep upon the kneeling-bench and has dreamed the whole affair. But the great thing is that I now have access to the prisoner, and as soon as night has come— Or perhaps you disapprove of my trick so greatly that you would wish me to restore the keys, and will refuse to go with me this night and use them to set that poor man free?"

"Certainly not, certainly not, Joris! Of course I am glad you have the keys, and most assuredly

will I accompany you to-night. Let us now hurry and finish our work."

"Hurrah!" shouted Joris, tossing the bunch of keys into the air and then carefully depositing them in his pocket.

The two then resumed their labors.

CHAPTER XXV.

PREACHING IN THE OPEN AIR.

THE farmer Dykerts was standing in the doorway of his barn looking intently up into the sky and shielding his eyes with his hand from the rays of the setting sun. While thus engaged Walter approached, unobserved by him ; he laid his hand upon the worthy peasant's shoulder, and said gently,

“What are you looking at, Dykerts? Have you no good expectations from the appearance of the heavens? Yet from that direction, it seems to me, comes every good and perfect gift.”

“Ah, Mr. Harmsen ! you are welcome. I am glad to see you ; I had expected to see you earlier. Yes, you are right : ‘Every good and perfect gift cometh from above.’ I was looking toward the south ; near the horizon, in the south-east, I notice some clouds which threaten a thunder-storm. But it may blow over ; it would really be a pity if the people were to be disappointed this evening.”

“Be not unnecessarily troubled, Dykerts ; the Lord must order it as seemeth him best. He will

bless our endeavors, whether we are prevented from meeting together this evening or not. Let us hope and pray that the Lord will pour out his Spirit upon these deluded multitudes and their deceivers, so that many may accept the word of salvation. But let us enter the house. Did you give wide notice of the meeting?"

"Yes, Mr. Harmsen," answered the peasant, entering the house with Walter. "People are coming from far and near—from every village in this vicinity, from Heyschoten, Zeist and Soest. I expect a great multitude. I believe some are coming even from Amersfoort. I do not expect many from Vlooswyk, however; something unusual is about to take place there. A few hours ago one of my farm-hands came from there and told me he had seen a number of suspicious characters thereabouts, and this afternoon he saw in our neighborhood those two men who gave your friend so much trouble in the Vrede inn. He knows them well."

"You mean those two Anabaptists who pursued the crazed woman to the house of the forester yesterday?"

"The same. Their names are, as my man tells me, Cornelis Koen and Gysbert Barends. We had better bear this in mind and seek to stop their roving hereabout. When such fellows as they are around, there is usually some rascality on foot."

"Be not alarmed, Dykerts; they can do no more

than our heavenly Father will permit. But have you heard whether the heiress of Vlooswyk is coming?"

"No. But here comes the host of the Vrede inn; perhaps he can give us further news."

The next comer was indeed the host, whom perhaps our readers have not forgotten. He greeted our friends warmly, but gave them no very encouraging information. He had encountered on the road many suspicious-looking people and many that were armed.

"As far as I am concerned," he remarked, "I prefer peace; that's the reason I gave my inn that name. Peace is best for everybody."

"I think the same," said Dykerts. "But there does not seem to be much chance of our getting peace just now; everywhere except in Holland the banner of war is still unfurled. The Spaniards have indeed been forced to abandon Kampen and Deventer, but who knows how soon they may recover those places? and then our province will be again exposed to their invasion. I wish that God would soon grant peace throughout our whole country."

"And yet you can hardly expect that he will, Dykerts," observed Walter. "You know what is the cause of this war. Is it not because Spain would not let us serve the Lord Jesus Christ as we wished? As long as our country was content to remain under the tyranny of Spanish and Romish

oppression, as long as men would adore the Virgin Mary and a host of saints, so long we had rest and quietness ; but no sooner did men allow themselves to be enlightened by the truth than the enemy aroused himself and declared war. The whole war is to us Christians summed up in one word—the truth, or no truth. Often what men call ‘peace,’ whether in the home, the State, the Church or the individual heart, is nothing but the peace of a person who has fallen asleep upon a sinking ship. As long as we remain upon this earth there will be something for us to do battle against.”

“Your words are startling, Mr. Harmsen,” said the innkeeper, “yet I can understand that in the way you mean them you are right. Methinks, from that standpoint, I had better change my sign.”

“Oh, let it hang as it is,” spoke Dykerts ; “it will do no harm to remind people that peace is desirable. Tell us: did you hear whether Lady Jacoba is coming to the preaching?”

“Certainly ; I was told she was coming with her nurse and the forester’s wife. If I am not mistaken, I see them approaching yonder.”

All looked through the window and saw that the innkeeper had seen aright: Lady Jacoba, her maid and the wife of the forester were drawing near the house.

From every direction the people now began to gather, disposing themselves upon the soft grass

under the fruit trees which surrounded Dykerts's house. The heiress of Vlooswyk and her companions, however, entered the house and came into the room where Walter and the two men were seated. Walter greeted Jacoba with the deference due to her station, but she, yielding to the simple and child-like impulse of her heart, held out to him both her hands. But her womanly instinct suddenly checked her first impulse; she blushed deeply, and, drawing back her hands, she said,

"Pardon me, Mr. Walter, but I know you will overlook my childishness. I am so happy when I see you that I almost forget to act with the proper dignity and the respect due to you."

"I have nothing to forgive," said Walter, smiling. He knew how little joy and comfort, young as she was, fell to her lot in earthly matters; he knew that her affection was but that of a sister toward a brother, and that it was a comfort to her to learn from him the ways of that Lord upon whose service her heart was set. He took her hand, therefore, and, pressing it cordially, continued:

"I also am rejoiced to see you here. I was almost afraid that you would be hindered in coming. Did not Lord John van Vlooswyk—"

Jacobas's blush vanished from her cheeks and left them deadly pale at the question:

"Do not mention that name here and now, for it fills me with terror whenever I hear it. I know

not how it is, but within the last few days I feel like a hunted deer. My guardian—whom, fortunately, I see but seldom—gives me little attention, but I have a presentiment that he is devising some scheme to injure me.”

“He shall not be permitted to do you any hurt, my dear lady. Remember God’s promises ; be of good courage. The Lord is your Shepherd ; you shall not want !”

While thus comforting Jacoba and addressing kindly words of Christian encouragement to the other women, Walter was interrupted by Dykerts, who had left the room and returned again, and who whispered something in his ear.

“You are right Dykerts,” said Walter. “I am ready ; I am coming.” He left the house, followed by the peasant and the women.

The orchard was black with people, who were scattered about in picturesque groups. They all seemed to be engaged in conversation of a serious nature, for several voices were heard speaking in earnest tones, and on passing a small group of men Walter heard such expressions as the following :

“I shall be surprised if the evening pass without disturbance.”

“Let them come, those ruffians !”

“Whoever dares attack this meeting will have me to deal with !”

“And me ! and me !” was heard from all direc-

tions, and many flourished firearms or long knives, showing that they were prepared for an assault.

The place which had been selected for the preaching-service was certainly well adapted to the purpose. On several sides the space was bordered by low underbrush, back of which rose the loftier trees of the forest, which prevented the voice of the preacher from being lost to the people on the outskirts of the audience. But if the eye of any one could have penetrated the surrounding woods, he would have perceived numbers of armed men approaching stealthily from various directions and creeping through the underbrush toward the listening multitude. Dykerts had unconsciously spoken the truth when he said that there would be a storm before the day was over.

Walter, in the mean time, had reached the spot where he was to stand and address the people. After silently and briefly sending up a prayer to God for aid, he climbed up on a broad table which had been placed under a spreading linden tree. The men reverently uncovered their heads as Walter opened a small Bible. The Lady Jacoba and her companions stood near, and carefully treasured up every word he spoke.

"My dear hearers," began the youth, with a clear and forcible voice, "there are, alas! many people—and certainly also among this very audience some—who, without knowing it, are really unbe-



Field-preaching in Holland.

lievers. These have no true conception of an omniscient, holy and eternal God whose eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. There are, indeed, some who live and act as if there were no God who will call them to account for their actions. But many who are more thoughtful than this, who give more or less attention to religion, do not, after all, know what God requires of them and what his service truly is. They depend upon their Church or upon the priests, as if these could take their place in serving God. Now, the word of God speaks as follows: 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' Neither your Church—which you call your holy mother—nor your priests can obtain salvation for you; for the first must come to an end, and the latter are persons as sinful as we are. Trust not to these. Listen to what the scripture saith: *we* must give an account; *we* must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

"He who would be saved must go with all his sins to God in the way that God himself has appointed. This way is Jesus Christ, for he himself said: 'I am the way, the truth and the life;' and again: 'I am the door; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' How many overlook these truths! Many a one brought by the Holy Spirit to convic-

tion of sin thinks that through this alone he is upon the way to God. Others go farther and feel sorrow for sin, thinking that this will more surely obtain the favor of the Lord. Others imagine that by abandoning old sins and forming new resolutions they can get close to the Lord and win his pardon.

“But all such forget that their salvation is not brought about by their feelings or works, but only by the merits of Jesus Christ and merely of grace. Do you not see that all these personal affections and meritorious doings are exactly equivalent in spirit to the vows and penances and self-inflicted scourgings which the priests lay upon men? It is all a looking away from Christ and *his* doings and merits to something in *us*.

“I have shown you abundantly on former occasions how these external artificial works prescribed by the priests fail to give peace to the conscience, and how little they can please God; but do not turn from these to other deceptions—the deceptions of your own hearts. Look only to Jesus, obey God in him, and you shall indeed turn from old sins and live better lives; yet not to claim heaven by these, but to show your gratitude to him for winning heaven for you. In Jesus Christ alone is salvation: he who comes to the Father must come by him.”

At this moment was heard a noise as if on every side branches were being broken off the trees. Walter ceased speaking and looked quickly around.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ASSAULT.

AS Walter Harmsen, startled by the noise in the bushes, looked around, he perceived the now but too familiar features of the two Anabaptists with whom he had had such unpleasant encounters before; accompanied by many others, they were hastening through the underbrush immediately in his rear with the evident intention of seizing him. For a moment he hesitated, but the noise had been heard by others, and here and there men who stood nearest the forest called out,

“We are betrayed! Enemies are approaching us!”

“Where are they? Where are they?” cried many voices.

“Hid in the woods on this side,” cried the first, pointing in that direction.

A number of men rushed into the bushes, but were speedily called back by cries on the opposite side:

“Here, mates! Help, help! We are attacked!”

The whole audience now rose, and all eyes were

turned to the spot whence these last cries proceeded. But in the same instant all perceived that they were beset, not on one side, but on all sides; the multitude were surrounded by a body of men who waited but the word of command to rush, sword in hand, among them. Great confusion arose; the one thought of all was to effect an escape. But whither should they escape? The way to Dykerts's house alone was open, and what protection could that afford?

"Death to the heretics!" sounded a voice which made Jacoba tremble, for she knew it but too well. "Kill every one you find here, but seize that arch-heretic there, the preacher, and bind him fast with strong cords," the same commanding voice directed.

But now the auditors were roused to their defence, for scarcely had these last words been spoken when several men drew their sharp knives and cried out,

"Let them come on! We are ready for them."

Walter still stood irresolute upon the table; he cast a look heavenward and fervently prayed for deliverance. But by reason of the confusion and the swaying of the crowd the table was soon upset, and Walter would have fallen to the ground if Dykerts and the innkeeper had not caught him.

"Keep between us, Mr. Harmsen; you are safe here. Do you not see that more than a score of men have gathered around us and will keep the enemy from touching you? We shall endeavor

to gain the house and there see if we can't elude them."

"Cut them down! Cut them down! Shoot and kill!" was the cry now raised on every hand.

The assailants obeyed the command, and fell upon the multitude; they seized the women and children and struck at the men with clubs and swords. The latter did not receive the blows passively, but, fearlessly defending their wives and children, they attacked the Anabaptists with staves and knives.

Meanwhile, Walter followed Dykerts toward the house, whither he had seen Jacoba betake herself as soon as the disturbance began. She and her companions had almost reached the dwelling, when several men, led by Lord John van Vlooswyk, interrupted her flight.

"Seize those women!" commanded Lord John.—"And what do I see? Are you here?" he continued, turning to Jacoba and giving her a look full of hatred and rage. "You here among these low people? I will now carry out my threat: to-morrow you go to a convent in France.—Away with her, men! Bind her upon a horse and take her to my castle."

The men proceeded to do as they were told. Jacoba, however, defended herself with extraordinary courage, but would have been compelled to yield very soon if assistance had not arrived at

this juncture. Walter had seen the young lady's peril, and, pointing this out to Dykerts and several other men, he pressed through the struggling masses, and reached Jacoba's side in time to receive her into his arms as she was about to fall exhausted to the ground. This excited the rage of Lord John beyond all bounds; unsheathing his sword, he was preparing to cleave Walter's head, when Dykerts by a powerful blow with a club warded off the fatal stroke. The peasant then threw himself upon the nobleman.

"Spare him, Dykerts—spare him!" cried Walter. "Do not spill blood unnecessarily."

"I will teach you to spare," roared Lord John, who, dashing Dykerts to the ground with a single blow of his hand, seized Walter by the throat; and the young preacher would certainly have been throttled by the nobleman had not a number of his friends thrown themselves between them.

Dykerts had quickly recovered himself, and while the others were busily engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with Lord John and his immediate followers the peasant whispered to Walter,

"Escape with the lady to my house, and thence to Utrecht, while we hold these scoundrels at bay."

He then rushed into the fray and dealt stunning blows right and left, as if to wipe out the momentary disgrace of his overthrow.

The fight became hot, but the advantage was on

the side of the assailants, who acted more in concert than the surprised multitude. The innkeeper received a blow upon the arm which disabled him; others were surrounded or attacked in the rear while battling bravely; many were killed, and others driven to flight. Dykerts was left for dead in front of his own house door. But the fury of John van Vlooswyk may be imagined when, after the fight was over, not a trace was to be found of either Walter Harmsen or his ward.

"Leave these men to lie where they are," he cried, with a voice trembling with anger; "they will not give us any more trouble to-day. But where is the abductor of my ward? Where is that arch-heretic? Him we must have, alive or dead. Where is he?"

"He went into the house," cried some.

"To the house, then, men!" commanded Lord John, pointing with outstretched sword in that direction.

With a loud shout the mob rushed toward the building.

"The doors are locked, Lord John," exclaimed Cornelis Koen.

"Beat the doors down or else set the nest on fire, and then the birds will fly out," replied the nobleman.

"The barn door is open," shouted Gysbert Barends; "there will be a way of entering the house through it."

"To the barn! to the barn!" were the shouts that now filled the air.

In a few moments the whole band of armed men stood within the barn adjoining the house. They now diligently sought for some entrance into the dwelling. Soon a door was found, but it defied all efforts to beat it down; it was constructed of thick oaken boards and securely bolted inside.

"Perhaps we can find some way into the house from the loft," cried some.

"A good idea," said Koen. "Here are ladders. Come on, mates! To the loft!" He placed a ladder against a cross-beam, and, taking his short sword between his teeth, rapidly climbed aloft.

But now a strange apparition came upon the scene. Dimly seen by the failing light of the rapidly-departing day, a woman was observed to spring upon the beam, seize the top of the ladder with a strong hand and throw it back. Cornelis Koen fell upon the stone floor with an imprecation upon his lips.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the woman on the beam.

"By my soul, it is the Gelderland woman!" cried Gysbert Barends.

"'The Gelderland woman'!" cried the other Anabaptists. "Where? where is she?"

"Up there!" shouted Barends.

"Whom do you mean?" inquired Lord John.

"The Gelderland woman—the crazy one; the

woman whom you met in our camp the other day, and who ran away," cried several voices.

Lord John turned deadly pale.

"Who? Who is it?" he stammered, while, as if struck with a sudden paralysis, he tottered, and would have fallen if Barends had not caught him.

"The crazed Gelderland woman," reiterated many around him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed and shrieked the woman.

Lord John now quickly regained his senses; his momentary fright seemed but to have inflamed his already furious wrath. In his anxiety to destroy the heretics, and especially Walter Harmsen, he had forgotten the flight of the crazed woman; there she was, and almost in his power. As John Williams had shown that he could not guard her safely and was but making gain out of him by means of her, it seemed that the moment had now fortunately come when he might finally rid himself of her. This living witness of his crime must be forever put out of the way.

"Oh! the crazy woman, is it?" he exclaimed. "Ten florins to him who captures her. Aloft, men! Some of us will guard the entrance to the barn."

Cornelis Koen, eager for the reward, forgot his former mishap and raised his ladder again; Barends and others did likewise, and several men at once climbed to the loft. But the crazed fugitive was nowhere to be found.

"That woman is a witch," exclaimed Koen; "she has vanished."

"St. Jacob defend us!" cried the Roman Catholics, crossing themselves. "It is dangerous to pursue witches; our priest told us so."

"That woman is no witch!" cried Lord John. "Keep a good lookout for her, so that she can't escape this way."

"She has flown," exclaimed Koen, still up in the loft. "But no! Ha! there she is!—Hurry, comrades! She is escaping by the front door. She has descended a step-ladder leading down into an inner apartment. Hurry! hurry! And what more do I see? Walter Harmsen! Yes, and the lady of Vlooswyk too! There they go! Hasten! hasten around to the front of the house!"

The men hurried down the ladders, while Lord John and those who had remained below hastened out of the barn and around to the front of the dwelling. But they were too late; for when they reached the front door, they saw a horse, upon which sat Walter Harmsen and Jacoba, running at a breakneck speed, and the crazed woman after them.

Lord John trembled with disappointed rage.

"Can you not overtake them?" he shouted.

"Impossible, Lord John," replied the men.

"Then run and shoot them down."

"And the lady of Vlooswyk?"

The nobleman hesitated a moment, but his reckless cruelty gained the mastery :

“I care not whom you hit! Run! pursue them to the death!” and, setting the example, he rushed in pursuit after the fugitives.

But these few moments of hesitancy had given the fugitives still further advantage over their pursuers. With their departure all was left in quietness in the neighborhood of Dykerts's house; only the dead and the dying and the waste and destruction of trees and bushes remained as evidence of the late desperate struggle.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JORIS AT WORK.

ON his way to the meeting at Dykerts's farm Walter had been met by his friend the ensign, who had warned him of danger and sought to dissuade him from going; not succeeding in this, the officer had promised to come to Walter's aid with a detachment of soldiers. We have seen that he did not fulfill that promise: it had not been possible for him to keep it. At the moment of the assault upon the preaching-service a riot had broken out in several of the wards of Utrecht. The report had reached the city that the citizens of Amersfoort had come into open conflict, that several churches had been plundered, the images demolished and many people killed, and that the riotous populace were now intending to march upon Utrecht. Not a soldier could be permitted to leave that city.

Meantime, Walter had succeeded in escaping with the Lady Jacoba, and had entrusted the heir-ess of Vlooswyk to the keeping of Goert van Reede, while he repaired to his grandfather's house. The

poor demented woman, however, had fallen into the hands of Koen and Barends. Lord John, promising them a liberal reward for their pains, ordered them to take the woman by a circuitous route to the convent of Our Lady, where he would meet them later.

Meantime, the outbreak in Utrecht was increasing in violence. In spite of the prompt measures which Goert van Reede and the chiefs of the militia had taken, the populace had sacked a few houses of the more zealous Romanists, entered one or two of the churches and committed other outrages, and were in hourly expectation of aid from Amersfoort.

Lord John van Vlooswyk and his fellow-conspirators in instigating the Romish populace had reckoned somewhat without their host. No sooner was a riotous spirit awakened among the people and were they precipitated by the fiery appeals of their ecclesiastics into riotous acts than they found a much more numerous party ready to play their own game on the opposite side. The Romanists were overwhelmed, and the Protestant mob, tempted to retaliate, committed greater excesses than they had intended, as they perceived their strength. Thus the riots, which it was thought would restore certain privileges to the Romanists, threatened to do them incalculable injury.

As the main reliance of the mob rested on aid from Amersfoort, special precautions were taken to

prevent the entrance of the outside rioters and their junction with those within. Dirk Gapertz, with a portion of the States' troops which formed the garrison, had been charged to watch the approach to the city from the north-east, while the militia would hold in check the populace within the city. The ensign had marched his men to an advantageous position, but scarce had evening descended when an officer arrived with a despatch from John of Nassau, saying that that he had succeeded in suppressing the riot at Amersfoort, so that Utrecht need look for no element of disturbance thence. Accordingly, the ensign left his position at the eastern gate to combine his forces with those at the scene of the riot.

Lord John van Vlooswyk had reached the convent before the arrival of the two Anabaptists with their unfortunate charge. He awaited them at the rear gate of the building, and admitted them to the small inner court; there he commanded them to remain and guard their captive. Then, entering the convent by another door, he went straight to the cell of the priest Waenders, with whom he wished to consult as to what should be done now that their plans had turned against themselves and the Romish cause.

It was at a critical moment that Ensign Gapertz reached the scene of conflict between the mob and the militia. The populace, favored by the darkness

of the night, marched shouting through the streets, and after encountering and routing parties of the Romanists in several parts of the city vented their rage upon certain buildings and private houses. Next they moved as with one impulse toward the convent of Our Lady. A fierce conflict raged before the front gate, which was bravely defended by the adherents of Rome. Neither the commandant of the militia nor Goert van Reede had been able to force the lawless mob to retreat, and even the arrival of the ensign with his troops had not turned the tide of battle. The ensign quickly saw that a surprise would throw the undisciplined mob into disorder; he therefore commanded his followers to march to the rear of the convent. Provided with torches, he would introduce his soldiers into the convent by scaling the wall of the inner court; then, making their way through the long, wide corridors and issuing in front, they would suddenly burst upon the fighting masses; or if by that time they had already stormed the gate, the soldiers could drive them from the building and prevent its being sacked.

Before the riot had drifted over to this part of the city Joris Ruikmans and Father Boniface had begun their stealthy approach to that part of the convent where was the small open court leading to the subterranean prison, with the intent of liberating the prisoner. Joris had been careful first to assure himself that the priest Waenders was still

confined to his bed ; he had seen the fat priest with his faithful shadow sitting at his bedside nodding and snoring. Now was the time to execute his purpose. When Father Boniface heard the uproar in the city, he had requested Joris to wait a few hours, till all was quiet ; but the nervous dwarf would listen to no delay, and Boniface had consented to accompany him to the dungeon. They were just crossing the chancel of the chapel when the quick-eared Joris heard a sound which awakened his suspicions.

Leaving Father Boniface, who was somewhat timid, to hide where he was, the dwarf crept cautiously forward toward the door leading to the court, whence the noise seemed to come. He heard the outer door open and three or four persons enter the place. Listening sharply, he soon distinguished a voice which caused him to tremble with excitement: it was that of Lord John van Vlooswyk, who was admitting the Anabaptists. He heard him charge them to guard carefully some one who seemed to be in their possession, promising soon to return.

Joris had scarce time to hide behind a pew when the nobleman entered the chapel and passed to the priest's apartment. The dwarf waited a long time to ascertain from the conversation of the men in the court who was in their keeping, but, hearing nothing except their curses, he went back on hands

and knees to Father Boniface's hiding-place and told him what had happened. They were at a loss what to do, for now their access to the subterranean vault was effectually cut off. They suspected that this was another victim of Lord John's cruelty and avarice, and that perhaps he had gone for the keys in order to place this one too within the horrible dungeon. That dungeon must be opened; such villainies perpetrated within these sacred precincts must be exposed. But how was it to be done? They were but two feeble creatures. Necessity, however, is the mother of Invention, and the quick-witted Joris conceived a possibility of attaining their end.

"Keep yourself hid for a few moments longer in this place," he said to Father Boniface; "I am going out into the court to see what is going on there."

"Do not do that, Joris," expostulated the aged Father; "let us rather go back to our cells and pray to God to help us in this thing."

"That is all very well, worthy Father—praying is excellent, and therefore our holy Church prescribes it—but *Ora et labora*, or, as it is in plain language, 'Pray and work,' is my motto. Methinks we could well combine the two in the present instance. You pray, and I will work; then we must surely succeed."

Father Boniface rebuked Joris for his levity, but

he saw that there was common sense in the proposition.

The dwarf returned to the door leading to the court and listened to the conversation without.

"I tell you, Gysbert," he heard one say, "I can't stand it here any longer. I have an intolerable thirst. This is fine company, this miserable creature here! I wish I were sitting in the Vrede inn; they have excellent beer there. How do you feel about it?"

"Oh, don't talk to me about it, Koen," said the other. "I don't see how two such men as we are could let ourselves be shut up within this court while our brethren are having a fine time of it sacking some house and emptying its wine-cellar. Couldn't John van Vlooswyk have seen to it that we had something to drink? We might have stood this stupid work much better then."

"You are right," replied the first, "but we can console ourselves with thinking that we'll make a nice little sum by this thing. If we only had something to wet our throats, we could be perfectly happy. But who knows what may happen? They say Lord John has a good turn sometimes."

"Yes; perhaps he'll remember us yet," said the other. "Hark! what is that?"

At this moment Joris opened the door, and, stepping boldly forth into the court, he called in loud tones,

"Are there not two men here who are guarding a prisoner?"

"Yes, yes!" was the reply.

"Very well. Lord John van Vlooswyk bade me tell you to repair to the vestry, where you will find a good supply of wine. Follow me closely, for it is pitch-dark. You can leave the prisoner here, for she can't escape."

The two pot-fellows had no reason to doubt Joris's bold words, and needed no second invitation; they followed him at once.

Joris conducted them across the chancel into the vestry-room, where he knew there was an ample supply of wine. He lighted a lamp, provided the men with a well-filled pitcher and left them to themselves, taking a lantern with him and softly bolting the door after him.

"So!" he said to himself; "they are safe, anyhow. Methinks that is a good piece of business. It was just as well Father Boniface did the praying, but I do not think my working was quite in vain."

Joris's training had not rendered his conscience sensitive on the point of doing evil that good may come.

The dwarf now approached the aged monk's hiding-place, and, having briefly told him what he had done, Father Boniface was easily persuaded to proceed with their original intention, and followed him to the court.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DEAD COME TO LIFE.

BEFORE Joris and Father Boniface reached the little court the cries of the riotous populace were heard as they began the attack upon the convent; soon after, the sound of the heavy sledgehammer blows upon the front gate reverberated through the immense building.

Father Boniface's heart failed him again, and he sought to persuade Joris to abandon their project and return to their cells or seek a place of still greater safety; but Joris would not listen to this. He said that even if the mob should succeed in forcing the front gate it would take some time, and they were close to the postern-gate and could easily escape: now, more than ever, was the time to open the prison. Father Boniface's fears were overruled by little Joris's masterful spirit.

When they reached the court, they perceived in one corner of it, crouching against the wall, the form of a woman; Joris at once surmised that it was the captive left in charge of the Anabaptists. Going up to her, he touched her on the shoulder and said in a compassionate tone of voice,

“Who are you?”

The woman gave no answer; and when Joris repeated his question, she moaned softly. He let the light of the lantern fall upon her features, and by their wild expression at once surmised that the woman was not in her right mind.

“What shall we do with her?” asked Joris of the monk. “Where shall we take her?”

“I do not know,” answered Father Boniface; “I only know that it is high time for her to quit this place. We ought not to leave her here.”

“By no means,” said Joris, decisively. “We must deliver her out of the hands of Lord John van Vlooswyk.”

Joris had scarcely spoken this name when the woman began to utter some indistinguishable sounds.

“What did you say?” asked Joris, kindly.

“Vlooswyk! Jacoba! Gerard! Poor man! Villain!”

“Is John van Vlooswyk a villain?” asked Boniface.

“Yes! yes! yes!” replied the woman, passionately.

“The poor creature is evidently crazy,” observed Joris, “although her mind seems perfectly sound on that subject. What do you think of taking her into the chapel and concealing her in one of the confessionals?”

“That is a good idea,” assented the monk; “but

make haste, for we shall have to look out for ourselves pretty soon. Do you not hear those blows against the front gate?"

"Yes," observed Joris, coolly, "but it will be a good while before they can get to us here."

So saying, he was about to assist the woman to her feet, when they heard voices within the convent. They desisted in affright, and Joris went back to the door through which they had just come, to see what it meant. He saw far within, along some of the upper corridors, the forms of men moving toward him, and, although in the darkness he could not tell who they were, he conjectured immediately that it was Lord John van Vlooswyk, with the two priests and the monks, seeking to escape. He heard Lord John say,

"Fear not, reverend sir; I have stationed on that side some men who will cover our escape. Lean upon me, for your steps are yet very feeble."

Joris was now in a dilemma. He had with him no key to the outer door; and if the nobleman found him here instead of the two Anabaptists, he might well fear for his life. He hastened back to Father Boniface, but scarce had he reached the little court when a new danger threatened, for on the other side of the wall was heard the sound of arms and the voice of a commanding-officer saying,

"Set the ladders against this wall and follow me!"

In the next moment the heads of several soldiers

appeared over the top of the wall. Ladders were next drawn up and let down on the inner side, and the men poured into the court.

Father Boniface uttered an exclamation of surprise when he recognized in the commanding-officer the ensign whom he had entertained in the library.

"Sir Ensign," he said, stepping up to him, "do you come here as friend or as foe?"

"I am a foe only to evil-doers, worthy Father," said Dirk Gapertz, pleased to find the monk here. "Your presence will aid us in undoing that piece of villainy you wot of."

Father Boniface pointed to the crazed woman, and told Dirk that she had been brought to that place by order of Lord John van Vlooswyk.

"The villain!" exclaimed the ensign. "Would he add another crime to his guilty record? But his career will soon come to an end."

"Sir Ensign," cried a soldier from the top of the wall, "there is a person here inquiring for you."

"Who is he?"

"He calls himself Walter Harmsen and asks to have but a few words with you."

"Assist him over the wall," was the command of the ensign.

A moment later, and Walter had descended into the court. His grandfather had insisted upon his leaving his bedside to hasten to the convent and see what he could do to save Father Boniface from the

hands of the mob. Arriving there, he had inquired for the ensign, and had learned that he had gone to the postern-gate. The monk and the ensign told him in few words the state of affairs. Lord John van Vlooswyk and his companions were approaching the court, and Joris Ruikmans crossed over to the vault, opened the iron door and entered the subterranean passageway to the cell of the prisoner.

Lord John had indeed heard the commotion within the court, but, supposing it proceeded from some of his own followers—as otherwise the two Anabaptists would certainly have given him the alarm—he unsuspectingly conducted the feeble priest to the chapel door. He had reached it and was about to issue from the building when the ensign, prepared by Joris for his appearance, stepped toward him and said,

“I have been ordered to take you into custody, Lord John van Vlooswyk. The precincts of this convent will afford us ample witness against you and your accomplices.”

The words had scarce left his lips when, before Lord John could frame a reply, a cry of distress was heard. It was the voice of Joris Ruikmans. The cry was repeated:

“Here! here! Help! I cannot go any farther! Help!”

All eyes turn in the direction of the cry; it comes

from within the dark recess of a vault. Torches are brought, and an open iron door is seen, upon the threshold of which they perceive the dwarf trying to sustain the sinking form of a man.

"Help me! help! He is falling; I cannot hold him any longer," cried Joris again.

"Whom have you there?" the ensign inquired.

But when the full light of several torches is brought to bear upon that prostrate form, a cry of astonishment escapes every lip. It is indeed a sight of horror. A man emaciated and ghastly pale from long imprisonment lies there unconscious and helpless. His body, loathsome with accumulated dirt, is barely covered with rags, and the long matted hair and beard straggle over his forehead and breast.

"It is the prisoner of Lord John van Vlooswyk," cries Joris; "I have set him free. Fourteen years has he been confined in that prison."

All hasten to assist Joris, and the unfortunate captive is brought out into the fresh air.

Suddenly the crazed woman forces her way through the circle of men, and, staring wildly at the prostrate form, she exclaims,

"Gerard van Vlooswyk!"

At these words the man opens his eyes, gazes earnestly and long upon the woman's features, and, stretching forth his arms, he cries,

"Jacoba!"

Meantime, Lord John van Vlooswyk stood near the entrance to the chapel, guarded by the soldiers whom the ensign had ordered to apprehend him, while he himself followed his men to the vault to ascertain the reason of Joris's cry.

The confusion occasioned by the movement of so many men had prevented Lord John from hearing what was going on in that part of the court, and he suspected nothing of the real state of the case, as he deemed it impossible that any one could have discovered the secret door within the vault. When there broke upon the awed silence caused by the sight of so much misery the two cries "Gerard van Vlooswyk !" and "Jacoba !" a sudden terror shook his frame. He tried to flee, but could not. Then, driven as by an irresistible impulse, he rushed to the spot where lay the two victims.

The ensign, pointing to the affecting scene, said to him,

"Behold your work, monster of iniquity ! Your day of reckoning has come. God pity your miserable soul !"

John van Vlooswyk staggered back in horror and affright, while the priest Waenders fell to the ground in a swoon.

At this moment little Joris approached the conscience-smitten nobleman and hissed into his ear,

"Did I not tell you that you would soon find what it meant to insult Joris Ruikmans ?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

REUNIONS AND FAREWELLS.

THE riot was suppressed and quiet restored within the city. Goert van Reede had remained in consultation with the magistracy throughout the entire night, and held conferences with both the Protestant preachers and the Romish ecclesiastics. As a result of these deliberations, a number of priests were ordered to leave the city as speedily as possible, while to the Reformed was granted the use of certain church-buildings in addition to those already in their possession. By these measures the Reformed party's claims were satisfied, and, although the Romanists naturally found much fault, they were compelled to yield. The firm attitude of the head-sheriff and his unshaken adherence to the terms of the union produced a wholesome effect. He enthusiastically commended the important services which had been rendered him by Dirk Garpertz, and took pains to mention these in a special letter to Count John of Nassau.

That same night John van Vlooswyk and the priest Waenders were placed in ward. A few days

later their trial took place; many crimes were laid to their charge, and, as they could bring in no defence, they were sentenced to perpetual banishment from the Seven Provinces and the confiscation of their goods.

The unfortunate Gerard van Vlooswyk had been during fourteen years the victim of the villainy of these men. Scarce three years married, he was enjoying with a tenderly-beloved wife and a little daughter of about sixteen months the very heights of domestic bliss, when his happiness was suddenly destroyed. His brother John, having in some way forfeited his inheritance, determined to secure by fraud and violence that which he could not rightfully obtain. An intimacy had sprung up between himself and a man of kindred nature, the priest Waenders. The latter, not less unscrupulous, but more cunning in his wickedness, devised means of securing what John desired. The Anabaptists had come into the neighborhood; by his advice John had visited their camp, and had gained their king's consent to aid him. A band of his followers beset Lord Gerard van Vlooswyk at a lonely spot to which he had been decoyed, and, having bound and gagged him, they conveyed him under cover of the night to the convent of Our Lady. There, by the aid of the priest, he was, as it were, buried alive.

Another party of the Anabaptists, meanwhile, secured the person of Lady van Vlooswyk. Anxiety

and fright deprived her of reason, so that it was difficult to detain her in the camp. More than once she escaped with her child, on one occasion succeeding in crossing the borders into Gelderland. It was at this time that the encounter took place which was witnessed by the preacher Sopingius. The child was now taken away from her, and Lord John assumed the guardianship of it, spreading the report that its parents had been captured by the enemy and put to death. The period was favorable for the general credence of such a report, for the country was passing through its earliest struggles against the oppression of Spain and much lawlessness prevailed.

There was one man, however, who had always doubted the truth of this report, and that was Count John of Nassau, who had been an intimate friend of Lord Gerard; but he had lacked the opportunity of investigating the matter until the union of Utrecht had been effected and he, as director of it, had been invested with authority within the province. The only thing he had been able to effect was to prevent the estate of Vlooswyk from passing unconditionally into the hands of Lord John; the child was declared sole heiress, and in case of her death the lands and property were to revert to the state. Thus her uncle could only enjoy the benefit of her father's property while acting as her guardian, and the scheme of possessing himself of it perma-

nently by forcing her to marry him had presented itself to his mind.

After so long a period of wretchedness and suffering, it was indeed a glad day for Lord Gerard van Vlooswyk when with his wife and child he once more was permitted to occupy his castle. Lady Vlooswyk's mind, which had been affected only during certain months of the year, was eventually restored to its former balance, the cause of her frenzied grief having been removed. It was a delightful surprise to the father to behold his little daughter transformed into a blooming maiden of sixteen. On the day of their return to their home, bonfires were lighted upon the grounds; and while the country-people outside held a jubilee and regaled themselves with the good things provided, fervent words of thanksgiving fell from the lips of the restored husband and father.

Walter Harmsen, his friend the ensign, Walter's grandfather and the aged Boniface were entertained at the castle, nor was little Joris forgotten.

Father Boniface renounced a Church so many of whose errors he had already detected, and whose institutions he could no longer endure. He adhered heartily to the doctrines of the Reformed, being much encouraged and instructed by conversations with the aged Harmsen, at whose house he was hospitably received when he left the convent. When Walter's grandfather died, Lord Gerard

appointed Boniface to a position at the castle, and there—where Joris Ruikmans also was retained in honorable service—the whilom monk passed his declining days until he was called to his rest.

On one of the early days in the month of August four young men might have seen walking together in cheerful conversation upon the road to Amersfoort between Castle ter Heide and the Vrede inn. When within view of the latter place, one of their number said,

“I am sorry, Walter, that we are so near the hour when we must take leave of one another. It was my desire, as it lay in my way, to part from you at the inn where we first met after so many years of separation.”

“I too am sorry, dear Dirk,” replied Walter Harmsen, “that the hour of parting is so near, but I trust it will not be so many years as before ere we meet again.”

“This too is my fervent wish, Walter. But we must wait upon the will of the Lord; we know not what he has in store for us: you know how precarious is the life of a soldier. But if we never meet again on earth, we have a country beyond the grave, a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where we assuredly shall meet never to part again.”

“Those are somewhat sombre thoughts, my

friends," said a third young man, in a light tone of voice—"rather too sombre for this bright, sunshiny day."

"Very proper thoughts for any day, Arminius," a fourth remarked, turning sharply upon the last speaker. "Do you not know that the Lord bids us be at all times prepared for death?"

"Dear Brully," interposed Arminius, "could you not adduce a text from your favorite Isaiah upon that subject?"

"I had better admonish you first to speak with more reverence of God's holy word. That topic admits of no frivolity."

"My friends," observed the ensign, "do not let me part from you with disputations upon your lips. I know that it is not ill-meant, but I cannot forget a proverb of my old parish priest of Egmond: 'They who often quarrel do as the devil wants them.'"

"You are right, Dirk," remarked Walter. "It is to be hoped that, now that Arminius is about to go to Germany to pursue his studies, he will begin to take a more serious view of things; and when Brully shall be enjoying the privilege of listening to the profound theological lectures of Professor Donnellus at Leyden University, I trust he will not forget to 'love the brethren.' But my own lecture is getting to be rather a long one; so that we shall all be glad that we have reached the inn. And

see ! there stands our friend Dykerts in the doorway.—How are you, Dykerts?—And you, mine host ?”

The four young men entered the inn and shook hands cordially with the peasant and the innkeeper. Dykerts had received some hard knocks in the fight around his house, but after the assailants left he recovered consciousness and found himself possessed of sufficient strength to enter his house ; he soon was as hale and hearty as ever. The innkeeper had suffered longer, as his arm was broken during the fray ; but his hurt too was now a thing of the past.

The friends remained together several hours, their pleasant intercourse not now disturbed, as once it had been, by interlopers. They congratulated one another that Count John of Nassau had succeeded in ridding the province of the Anabaptists, and speculated upon the sentence that would be awarded to Koen and Barends, who had been arrested not only for complicity with the kidnapping of Jacoba, but also for many other more recent offences in which they had been concerned, and which were proven against them.

Finally the hour arrived which had been fixed for the parting. The ensign took cordial leave of Arminius and Brully, and then Walter and he left the inn together, and the two friends separated at a little distance from the house.

“The Lord guide you, dear friend and brother!” said Walter, deeply agitated. “May his right hand preserve you in battle against temporal foes, but may he also keep your heart firm in wrestling against spiritual enemies and grant you many victories in the ways of grace!”

“Farewell, my dearest Walter,” replied the ensign, equally moved. “It has done my heart good to meet you again, for I can never forget that it was you whose words led me to give my love and my service to Jesus. The Lord reward you! And may he be with you upon all those journeys through this land whereby you will carry the gospel to so many hearts and homes! Farewell! and if it should be that this is the last time we meet in the flesh, it will not be the last time that we see each other.”

The friends embraced tenderly, and then reluctantly parted.

The ensign took the road to Amersfoort; Arminius and Brully were already on their way to Utrecht; while Walter turned his footsteps slowly and pensively into the road that led to the castle of Vlooswyk. He was yet a few hundred paces from the forester's house, when he was suddenly awaked from his meditations by the voice of Jacoba, who was about to enter the house, but on seeing him had come to welcome him.

“How glad I am to see you!” she said as they

drew near each other. "I did not expect you to-day."

"My friend was compelled to leave earlier than he intended," replied Walter, after returning her greeting, "and, as I had promised Lord van Vlooswyk a visit before my departure, I make use of my superfluous hours to-day."

Jacoba's lips began to tremble, and tears stood in her eyes as she replied,

"It is not kind of you to remind me of your departure so soon after our meeting, when I was just rejoicing that you had come." She spoke with that childlike frankness that was characteristic of her.

Walter was too noble and too wise to take advantage of this pure and sisterly affection and seek to deepen it into anything else. His mind was made up, and his life-work was before him. The day of struggle had now gone by, therefore he replied gently,

"My dear Lady Jacoba, pardon me if against my will I have caused you any grief, but you knew that I was to leave this province very soon. As you are aware, my aged grandfather died four weeks ago, and now nothing remains to bind me to Utrecht."

"Nothing?" asked Jacoba. "Are there, then, no men, women and children in these regions whom you have brought to the knowledge of Jesus? And

do you forget that there is one especially who shall ever remember to her dying-day those happy hours which we spent together in that house yonder while we read and studied God's word, and who regards you—" She suddenly ceased speaking, and blushed deeply.

"No, dear lady, I shall never forget those hours, and the remembrance of them nearly breaks my heart; but the love of souls moves me to depart and go elsewhere. Thousands are yet entangled in the snares of Romish superstition; they cry for the bread of life, and through lack of laborers they are left to famish. I must—I *must*—go: the Lord calls me; and, though it pains me to leave many who love me, and whom I love in return—though it grieves me more than all to part from you—I must say with Paul, 'The love of Christ constraineth me.'"

For several minutes neither could speak a word. They slowly walked past the forester's house up the path to the castle.

Jacoba's heart beat vehemently. The conflict between her love for him who had first preached to her the word of her salvation and submission to the will of God was a severe one, but it did not last long. She was the first to speak again, and, looking at Walter through her tears, she said tenderly but firmly,

"Go, my friend, and may the Lord go with you!

That to which God calls you perform, and let no one venture to hinder you. I will not tempt you to abandon your work, but my prayers shall be as guardian angels round about you." Thus speaking, she entered the castle with him.

THE END.

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